RECIPROCITY, SACRIFICE, AND SALVATION
IN JUDEAN RELIGION AT THE TURN OF THE ERA

BY

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CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

He who is about to sacrifice must examine not whether the sacrificial animal is unblemished but whether his own thinking is perfect and absolutely composed. Let him also examine why it is worthwhile for him to offer sacrifices. For either he is giving thanks for previous benefits, or he is asking for security in present circumstances, or for the acquisition of future benefits, or for the averting of present or expected evils, for all of which he is obliged to furnish his mind with soundness and well-being.¹

In the passage above, which is part of an excursive discussion of the biblical prohibition against bringing the wages of a prostitute into the Jerusalem Temple,² Philo of Alexandria specifies both the motivating interests that lead people to offer sacrifices as well as the mental disposition that should attend such offerings. Despite Philo’s well-known tendencies toward biblical allegorization and intellectual abstraction, his presentation of the rationale for offering sacrifices is remarkably practical and unmistakably reciprocal.³ Sacrifices are offered in order to give thanks to God for “previous benefits,” to maintain security in the present, for the “acquisition of future benefits,” or for “the averting of present or expected evils.” The religious assumptions

¹ Philo, The Special Laws, 1.283. I have employed the text of the Loeb edition. For detailed treatment of this passage, see below p.102*. Translations of Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew are my own unless otherwise noted.
² 1:280-284; Deut 23:18.
³ By “reciprocal” I mean involving exchange of a social and non-economic/monetary nature. I discuss religious reciprocity in greater detail in my methodology section below.
undergirding this schema,\(^4\) which does not derive from any biblical text, are implicit yet clear: God has the ability to provide tangible benefits and to remove misfortunes, and people undertake sacrifice in pursuit of such aims. The exhortatory and noetic\(^5\) content of the passage, typical of Philo, does not undermine the practical interestedness or reciprocal logic of sacrifice; rather, it is aimed at ensuring that the person offering sacrifices maintains the correct state of mind in pursuit of the goal being sought.\(^6\)

Philo of Alexandria is far from the only Judean/Jewish/Israelite\(^7\) author in whose writings animal sacrifice is meaningfully bound up with notions of human-divine reciprocity. Although the reciprocal logic of sacrificial practice is rarely stated so directly, the present study will show that this logic is implicitly evident and conceptually operative in an enormous variety of Judean textual sources. I provide here some further examples. After stating, “on account of God (אלוהי) the healer becomes wise,”\(^8\) the Wisdom of Ben Sira provides the following advice:

> My son, when sick, do not become upset, pray to God, for God will heal [you]. Turn away from injustice and favoritism; purify [your] heart of all transgressions. Give a sweet-smelling sacrifice\(^9\) and a memorial portion (אזכרה) [of flour], arrange a fat [offering] (דשן), within the limits of your wealth.\(^{10}\)

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\(^4\) I define the term “religious” as pertaining to gods and other non-obvious beings that are considered to possess human-like minds, such as ancestors, heroes, spirits, demons, angels, etc. When I use the term “religion,” I refer to the field of human social practices that involve gods and other non-obvious beings.

\(^5\) I define “noetic” as pertaining to the mind or intellect.


\(^7\) See Steven Mason, “Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 457-512. I am convinced by Mason’s argument that before Late Antiquity the Greek and Latin terms for Jews/Judeans denoted an ethnic group, and that “the Judeans” were considered an ethnic group akin to other ethnic groups.

\(^8\) Sir 38:2 (Ms. B; Heb: רופא יحلمו אלה מכתי). For this and other passages from Ben Sira, I have employed the fragmentary texts in Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of all Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Ben Sira Texts* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

\(^9\) Following the Greek (δόζ εὐωδίαν); Hebrew text missing.

\(^{10}\) Sir 38:9-11 (Ms. B).
Like the passage from Philo, this text specifies the mental and ethical preconditions for offering sacrifices in an explicitly reciprocal situation.\textsuperscript{11} This passage is especially instructive because it spells out one of the concrete goods that God might provide in response to a sacrifice offered with the correct ethical disposition, namely healing. Corroborating this association, the first-century Judean priest and historian Josephus states that certain sacrifices were offered at the Jerusalem Temple on account of “escaping from diseases.”\textsuperscript{12} In his recounting of the recent political history of Judea, Josephus also depicts various prominent figures offering sacrifices to God in moments of danger, supplicating divine aid,\textsuperscript{13} and in moments of triumph, giving thanks for divine aid.\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, Josephus’s biblical retellings frequently portray the offering of sacrifices in reciprocal situations that do not have analogues in biblical texts.\textsuperscript{15} For example, 2 Kings 19:1-7\textsuperscript{16} depicts Hezekiah sending a request to Isaiah that he pray to God on behalf of the remnant of Judah in their struggle against the Assyrian army. Josephus’s version of this narrative adds details about sacrifice and supplication:

[Hezekiah] requested that [Isaiah] would pray to God, and offer sacrifice for their common deliverance, and to entreat [God] to be hostile toward the expectations of their enemies, and to take mercy upon his people. When the prophet had done

\begin{footnotes}
\item[11] The text may assume that the illness has been caused by one’s transgressions. Alternatively, the purifying may be precautionary or preliminary.
\item[12] Ant. 3.237. Gk: τὰς νόσους διαφυγεῖν.
\item[13] E.g., “When [Herod] had encouraged the [Judeans against the Arabians] and he saw that the army was ready, he sacrificed to God (ἔθυεν τῷ θεῷ). After the sacrifice, he crossed the river Jordan with his force, and camped at Philadelphia, near the enemy…” War 1.380.
\item[14] E.g., “When the Temple was built by the priests in a year and five months, the people were filled with joy, and they were giving thanks (εὐχαριστηρίους ἐποιοῦντο) to God and to the readiness and resolve of the king, feasting (ἐορτάζοντες) and celebrating the rebuilding. Now the king sacrificed three hundred bulls to God, and the rest [sacrificed] according to their ability, the number of [sacrifices] one cannot say…” Ant. 15.421-423.
\item[15] This observation applies to both Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible, as we have them.
\item[16] This text also appears at Isa 37:1-7.
\end{footnotes}
these things, he received an encouraging oracle from God…\textsuperscript{17}

*Antiquities* contains numerous examples of such narrative details involving sacrifice and reciprocity that have no precedent in biblical texts.\textsuperscript{18} The inclusion of these details is relevant whether it reflects Josephus’s own thinking about sacrifice, or a sacrifice-rich biblical narrative tradition. The association between sacrifice and reciprocity is also observable in the Greek writings of another first-century Judean author. Although the Apostle Paul does not advocate offering sacrifices directly, he employs sacrificial terms to describe reciprocal transactions that take place between humans and God. For example, after referring to the gift from the Philippians as “a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God,” Paul promises, “God will fulfill your every need according to his riches in glory in Jesus Christ,”\textsuperscript{19} likely in response to their gift.

The connection between sacrifice and reciprocity is not limited only to Hellenistic Judean writings. One of the late fifth-century B.C.E. Aramaic papyri recovered from Elephantine provides further, first-hand, priestly evidence for the reciprocal logic of sacrificial offerings. In a letter written to Bagohi, governor of the Persian satrapy of Yehud, the priest Jedaniah promises to offer sacrifices on the latter’s behalf if he might provide a letter in support of the rebuilding of the temple of Yahu (יהוה) in Elephantine:

> [The priests] will offer tribute [of flour], frankincense, and ascending offerings on the altar of the god Yahu in your name, and we will pray for you at all times…. If [you] act thus and this temple (אגורא) is rebuilt, you will have merit (צדקה) before Yahu, god of the Heavens, more than a man who offered ascending offerings and

\textsuperscript{17} *Ant.* 10.12-13.

\textsuperscript{18} E.g., *Ant* 1.92; 2.270-276, 2.349; 3.38, 3:60-65. There are many more examples, which I intend to treat in a future publication.

\textsuperscript{19} Phil 4:18-19. For treatment of this text in further detail, see below pp.161-163.
slain offerings worth a thousand talents of silver.\textsuperscript{20}

The operative assumption here is that offering sacrifices brings merit to the offerer in proportion to their value, but rebuilding the temple brings even more merit.

Numerous texts in the Hebrew Bible stemming from various sources and periods employ cultic terminology for sacrificial offerings that is often identical to or derived from common Northwest Semitic terminology for gift-giving. Two types of sacrificial offerings, the vow offering (נדר) and the thank offering (תודה), both of which are relatively common in biblical texts,\textsuperscript{21} directly presuppose a bilateral framework of reciprocal exchange in their very terminology. The association between sacrifice and reciprocity continues long into the post-Temple era. In its comment to Deut 12:7, the third-century C.E. midrash collection \textit{Sifre} to Deuteronomy articulates the principle of human-divine reciprocity from both the divine perspective, “as for what you send [with] your hands [i.e., offerings], I will send a blessing for it,”\textsuperscript{22} and from the human perspective, “offer everything in accordance with the blessing [one has received from God].”\textsuperscript{23} Indeed, I will argue that the notion that sacrifices are an effective means of obtaining or responding to the provision of tangible benefits by God is commonplace in ancient Judean texts.


\textsuperscript{22} Heb: בכל מה שאתים שלוחא ב וידכומ ברוח אלוהא ב.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Sifrei Pisqa} 64. For detailed treatment of this text see below, pp.271-272.
The focus of the present study is the sacrificial cult of Yahweh at the Jerusalem Temple in the late Second Temple or Herodian period (roughly the very late first century B.C.E. until 70 C.E.), although I analyze relevant material from both earlier and later periods as well. Several factors recommend this geographical and chronological focus. First, owing to the extensive preservation of textual materials in Christian and Jewish circles, there is a relative abundance of textual data for the Jerusalem Temple cult at this historical moment—far more than for any other ancient temple. The coordination and marshaling of this variegated textual data requires careful consideration of the historical and ideological characteristics of the various sources in which they are contained, but it yields a significant quantity of relevant and historically situated evidence. Second, a study of Judean/Israelite cults across the span of their historical activity seems inadvisable for several reasons. These include the sheer length of this period (from roughly the 11th century B.C.E. until the closure of the Oniad temple in 73 C.E.), the fact that the cults underwent significant, often tumultuous changes, and, not the least, the numerous, seemingly intractable historiographic issues surrounding the biblical texts that represent and misrepresent these cults. Focusing on the Herodian period avoids some of the tortuous issues pertaining to the dating and historical veracity of many biblical texts while endowing my conclusions with a relatively high degree of historical specificity.

24 Some of the texts I employ provide first-hand accounts of the cult, whereas others provide cultic prescriptions and others still are textually-based interpretations of the cult. Some of the texts are programmatic and ideological and others less so. I attend to these issues in detail in every chapter of the dissertation.
The primary aim of this study is to uncover and illuminate the practical logic of the Herodian sacrificial cult.²⁵ I argue that lay and priestly participants alike understood the sacrificial practices that took place at the Jerusalem Temple to function in primarily a reciprocal manner.²⁶ By this I mean that the sacrificial portions that were burnt on the altar or poured out at its base were generally conceived of as gifts to God that entailed a variety of tangible returns and involved all of the social complexity and nuance that attends gift-giving in human contexts. Gift-exchange, for example, does not take place between aggrieved parties, whether human or divine, at least not in good faith. In support

²⁵ By ‘practical logic’ I mean common and often implicit understandings of the purposes for and the means by which a person undertakes a practice.
²⁶ Throughout this dissertation I analyze the offering of sacrifices first and foremost as a kind of religious practice and only occasionally as a kind of “ritual.” I define religious practices as a discrete subset of human social practices wherein people interact with gods and other non-obvious beings (ancestors, spirits, heroes, etc.) in pursuit of various—often tangible—interests (blessings, health, foreknowledge, increase) and in accordance with customary social protocols. For the purposes of this study, I define ritual as the specific procedures and protocols that might attend a religious practice, which might derive from common custom, the guidance of a ritual specialist, a ritual text, or some combination of these. While some adherence to protocols and expectations attends any and every social practice, I believe that the degree of ritualization might vary depending on the context of a religious practice. Indeed, I would suggest that a ritualizing approach to religious practices is a discrete strategy of ritual specialists. A brief illustration to clarify this dichotomy: I define the offering of sacrificial portions of an animal to Yahweh as a religious practice. These portions, I suggest, were understood to constitute a pleasing gift to Yahweh that might engender a counter-gift; hence, the primary logic of this practice, in my view, is transactional, relational, and interactive. The ritual elements of this practice, in my framework, would be first the selection of a clean and whole animal, leading it to the altar, indicating the owner of the animal and its recipient by way of hand-laying, slaughtering the animal in a prescribed manner, cutting it up and skinning the animal, pouring the blood at the sides of the altar, incinerating some pieces on the altar for Yahweh, pouring wine on the offering, adding grain, etc. In my perspective, the social-interactive analysis of sacrificial practices that I have undertaken here explains sacrifice not only in terms of religious action (reciprocal exchange) but also in terms of ritual—the various priestly ritual guidelines intend that Yahweh’s sacrificial gifts are to be of a quality that befits his grandeur (i.e., not dirty or defective) and that they are conveyed in a manner that he might receive them (i.e., at the altar in the Temple that is his earthly residence). I am aware that my analysis departs considerably from existing theorizations of ritual that currently enjoy prominence in the field of religious studies. For example, according to Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 197, “ritualization is first and foremost a strategy for the construction of certain types of power relationships effective within particular social organizations.” Had I followed this intellectual approach, I would have been unable to provide solutions to the various problems I treat below.
of this argument, I will demonstrate that nearly all ancient sources of relevance to the Jerusalem Temple cult explicitly state or implicitly assume the reciprocal logic of sacrificial practices. In addition, I argue that this “sacrificial-reciprocal” mode of religiosity\textsuperscript{27} was prevalent in Judean religion until the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E and beyond.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{27} By “mode of religiosity” I mean a materially embedded and socially prevalent set of religious practices (i.e., sacrifice, prayer) and practical assumptions about those practices (i.e., sacrifices should be conducted in a state of purity) and how they relate to the gods (i.e., the gods might respond to prayers that accompany sacrifices; the gods reject sacrifices from evil people).
\textsuperscript{28} Our textual sources suggest that throughout the history of Judean sacrificial cults women were excluded from working as priests, slaughtering sacrificial animals, and offering sacrificial portions at Yahweh’s altars. The religious specialists who perform these tasks in biblical texts are exclusively men of various priestly lineages: “the sons of Eli” (1Sam 2:12), “the sons of Levi” (Deut 21:5), “the sons of Zadok” (Ezek 44:15), “the sons of Aaron” (Lev 3:5). It is noteworthy that this gendered segregation of priestly labor is not the subject of dispute or controversy in any biblical text. Nevertheless, our sources also suggest that women were included in festive meals and received portions of sacrificial meat (1Sam 1:4-5; Deut 16:11, 14). Moreover, the Priestly source of the Pentateuch prescribes that the daughters of priests are to receive allotments of holy sacrificial meat (Lev 10:14; Num 18:11, 19). In my opinion, our scant data on this topic is insufficient to offer wider commentary on the social or religious effects of the exclusion of women from holding priestly offices.
\end{flushright}
The historical prevalence of what I call sacrificial-reciprocity is not limited to ancient Judean religion or even to ancient Near Eastern religion more generally. To the contrary, this practical religious conception was common in most ancient and many pre-modern agriculturally based societies, including the kingdoms and empires of ancient South Asia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and pre-modern China. In such societies the offering of agricultural products such as the meat of domesticated animals and cereal grains to the gods in exchange for such hard to come by goods as rain, fertility, good-fortune, and health would have been resonant with the concerns of both peasant farmers and land-holding aristocrats. While a wide-ranging comparative enterprise would exceed the limits of the present study, in the chapters that follow I adduce numerous points of similarity between Judean notions of sacrificial reciprocity and those that appear in non-Judean Greek and Roman sources. This limited comparative undertaking is valuable because it points toward a more nuanced picture of both ancient Judean religion


30 For a similar list, see Jon D. Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 16, “the [Greek] gods of local cult, most with their own local mythology, all with sanctuaries tended by families or states, all promis[ed], in some form, health, safety, fertility, or economic success.”

31 Robert Parker, “Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion,” in Reciprocity in Ancienct Greece (Eds. Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite, and Richard Seaford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 105-126, is a rich source for Greek data. Scholars of ancient religion are sometimes hesitant about undertaking cross-cultural comparison. As I see it there are two reasons for this hesitation. First, comparative projects are sometimes heavy on models and light on data, resulting in conclusions that are more interpretive than empirical. Second, it is sometimes argued (though more often simply asserted) that cultures are selfsame social-symbolic systems that innately defy comparison. The former of these two concerns seems to me entirely valid. To my mind, data should be used to test and refine models; models should not be used in order to augment or “fill in” missing data. The latter concern is less valid. It seems to me to be a hypothesis that could (and should) be tested, not a proven axiom, as it is often treated. Adherence to this axiom has caused some scholars to overlook or dismiss a great deal of evidence that suggests many religious practices have similar cultural logics “cross-culturally.”
and ancient Mediterranean religion more generally. In addition, it participates in the ongoing project of normalizing scholarly depictions of Judean religion, which have a tendency to depict Judean religion as being qualitatively singular or unique, or to focus on those features of Judean religion that are singular while overlooking significant features that are common to both Judean and non-Judean religion. Finally, I suggest that sustained comparison of this manner has the potential to yield a coherent explanation of animal sacrifice that is conceptually anchored in everyday human interests and routine social practices.³²

There are many factors that justify the present study. Among scholars of ancient Judaism and Christianity there is near unanimous agreement, and for good reason, that the Jerusalem Temple was central to Second Temple Judaism, as the very term attests. It is also widely assumed that the Temple had some central if not entirely clear role in the life and death of Jesus and the development of earliest Christianity. Yet the sacrificial cult of the Second Temple, which was fundamental to the Temple’s day-to-day functioning, has yet to receive dedicated scholarly attention, despite the relative wealth of evidence that exists for it in this period. This study is the first work to assemble and provide a coherent explanation for all data relevant to the practical logic and functioning of the Temple cult in this (or any) particular historical period.

Existing scholarly treatments of the Second Temple cult tend to be brief and piecemeal, sometimes displaying an anachronistic bias toward later modes of religiosity.

³² In this historically and culturally situated study of practical understandings of animal sacrifice, I seek to contribute to the scholarly study of animal sacrifice and temple religion more generally. The sheer number of highly speculative, mutually exclusive, and widely diverging explanatory approaches to the topic of animal sacrifice provides good evidence that the phenomenon is poorly understood. My own approach will bring together a large body of evidence concerning a renowned animal-sacrificing temple from a period when such practices constituted a prevalent mode of religiosity.
or religious concerns. For example, in *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Shaye Cohen acknowledges the importance of the Jerusalem Temple and its cult to Second Temple Judaism, but neglects the topic of sacrifice, focusing instead on prayer and its positive qualities vis-à-vis sacrifice: “The contrast between sacrifice and prayer is the contrast between elitism and populism.” Other scholars, such as Seth Schwartz, focus on the Temple’s supposed capacity to produce Jewish identity and social cohesion, while neglecting the practical religiosity of the sacrificial cult altogether. In *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, Schwartz asserts, “the symbolic power of the temple is best demonstrated by the fact that the temple treasury was overflowing with silver…. It is worth emphasizing that these voluntary gifts were made to an institution that could offer

![Image](https://example.com/image)

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33 “The central institution of worship in the pre-exilic period was the temple, and the central feature of the cult was the sacrifice of animals.” Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006) 102.

34 Cohen’s treatment of the sacrifices is brief, consisting of only a few generic sentences: “The Tamid was God’s daily ‘food’”; “sacrifices … were purchased and brought to the temple by individuals, either to seek atonement or to express gratitude to God.” Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 63.

35 Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 63

36 Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 66. “The major development in the Judaism of the second temple and rabbinic periods is the democratization of religion… the temple was supplemented by the synagogue, a lay institution; the sacrificial cult was supplemented by prayer, a cultic practice open to all; and the priest was supplemented by the scribe, the learned teacher” [101-102].

37 Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 49, “If many or most Palestinian Jews had been asked what it was that made them what they were… they would likely have answered that it was the worship of the one God, in the one Temple of Jerusalem, in accordance with the laws of the Torah.” “[T]he core ideology of Judaism [God, Torah, Temple]... function[ed] as an integrating force in Palestinian Jewish society” [103]. In my view, the functionalist interpretation of the Temple’s “integrative” role in Second Temple Judean society is based on problematic theoretical models.
nothing tangible in return.” To the contrary, I will argue that there is clear evidence that tangible returns were indeed expected for offerings made at the Temple.

Contemporary scholars of early Christianity tend to focus on the atoning capacity of the sacrificial cult and the emotional experience of sacrifice, overlooking reciprocity entirely. The focus on atonement is evident in Timothy Wardle’s recent work, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*: “at the center of the Jewish religious universe stood the sacrificial system and its provision for atonement and forgiveness;” “without the temple there would have been nothing to offer in terms of atonement and restitution.” A similar focus on atonement can be seen in the fact that separate narrative depictions of “typical Temple visits” written by E. P. Sanders and Paula Fredriksen both involve sacrifices for moral atonement. These same scholars emphasize the supposed emotional impact of the sacrificial experience, which is co-terminus with the death of the sacrificial animal. In *Judaism Practice and Belief*, Sanders speaks of the “meaningfulness and awesomeness of the moment;” in *Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews*, Fredriksen mentions the awe inspired by “the silent beauty of the atonement.” This preoccupation with emotion, atonement, and death, I will argue, reflects Christian interests and concerns.

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38 Italics mine. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 62. Such disregard for the practical logic of religious practices is typical of both social functionalist approaches to religion generally as well as some modern theologies—including Jewish theologies—that make identity and community the “real” core of religion.


40 Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*, 23. “[T]he sacrificial system... provided atonement for sin and maintenance of the individual's relationship with the God of Israel” [30].


43 Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*, 49.
rather than any concern with these matters in Second Temple sources.

Setting aside the treatments of the Second Temple cult of the kind surveyed above, I will now briefly discuss scholarly presentations of the Judean cult that are not anchored in any particular historical period. The focus of much of this scholarship has fallen on the related issues of ritual and moral purity and impurity on the one hand, and purification and atonement sacrifices with their attendant blood rites on the other. As a result, the role or place of human-divine reciprocal exchange in the Judean cult has not received sustained scholarly attention in this subfield either. By this omission, I submit, a crucial element of the practical logic of Judean animal sacrifice has been overlooked. This, in conjunction with the rather singular focus on atonement and purification, has resulted in a distorted image of the Temple cult and ancient Judean religion more generally. One partial exception to this generalization appears in Jacob Milgrom’s important commentary on Leviticus 1-16, in which the connection between reciprocity and sacrifice is made explicit:

The quintessential sacrificial act... is the transference of property from the profane to the sacred realm, thus making a gift to the deity. That this notion is also basic to Israelite sacrifice is demonstrated by fundamental sacrificial terms that connote a gift, such as mattănāḥ, qorbān, minḥāh, and ‘iššēh... The motivation of seeking divine aid is attested in many texts, such as “Offer to God a thanksgiving offering and pay your vows to the Most High... I will deliver you and you shall glorify me’ (Ps 50:14-15).”

I agree with this perspective, but Milgrom does not sustain the argument. His treatment of sacrificial reciprocity amounts to only a few paragraphs of his massive commentary.

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46 Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, 441.
Furthermore, he effectively undermines the argument for reciprocity through various speculative assertions concerning what he thinks are the complex moral and psychological underpinnings of the sacrificial “system.”\textsuperscript{47} Much attention is devoted to the supposed “ethical… rationale for the sacrifices,”\textsuperscript{48} especially purification sacrifices. Milgrom himself effectively admits that his discursive treatments of the sacrificial system are based on a good deal of speculation: “the texts are not always helpful. Nevertheless, hints gleaned from the terminology and the descriptions of the rites themselves will occasionally illuminate our path.”\textsuperscript{49} In contrast to the so-called “ethical rationale” for the sacrifices, the reciprocal rationale is often explicit and clear in the texts, and has many parallels from neighboring societies in the ancient Near East, as Milgrom himself shows.

The neglect of the reciprocal dimension of sacrifice has to do with a number of related theological, theoretical, and textual issues. I have addressed some of the theological and theoretical issues above; I will briefly address the textual issue here. With a few exceptions, the idea of sacrificial reciprocity does not receive dedicated or lengthy treatment in any of our textual evidence for ancient Judean religion. This is not to say that it is not observable; it is, as I will show. That there is no generalized discourse of the logic of sacrifice should be unsurprising; I suggest that like many other social practices the logic of sacrifice was embedded in practice and implicitly assumed by participants.

\textsuperscript{47} Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus 1-16}, 49, “The sacrificial system... possesses a distinctive theology (rather, theologies) of its own. No single theory embraces the entire complex of sacrifices. All that can be said by way of generalization is that the sacrifices cover the gamut of the psychological, emotional, and religious needs of the people.”

\textsuperscript{48} Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus 1-16}, 51. “When the priest consumes the [purification offering] he is making a profound theological statement: holiness has swallowed impurity; life can defeat death. This symbolism carries through all of the rites with the purification offering” [638].

\textsuperscript{49} Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus 1-16}, 49. In my view, Milgrom’s interpretations of the Judean cult are based as much, if not more, on his own assumptions about what religion should be (ethics, morality, community) than they are on close and careful attention to the ancient evidence.
But the lack of a generalized discourse of sacrifice only goes so far in explaining the scholarly neglect of the reciprocal aspect of sacrifice; in my view, this derives more from unsubstantiated and problematic models and assumptions than it does from any ambiguity in the data.

Despite the prominence of the Jerusalem Temple and the ubiquity of sacrificial-reciprocal religion during the period under investigation, there were, as is well-known, religious specialists and groups who engaged in religious practices with the god of Israel but who did not practice reciprocity with this god by way of sacrifice. In making the case for the sacrificial-reciprocal mode of religiosity in the Judean religion of the late Second Temple period, it is necessary that I address these specialists and groups who did not advocate participation in the sacrificial cult. Chapters five through seven of this study focus on two sets of texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Epistles, which provide evidence for two such groups or, better, sets of affiliated groups. These corpora are fascinating for they respectively articulate religious scenarios in which the offering of sacrifices would be of little use given the reciprocal theorization of sacrifice above: God is angry with humans due to their ethical and religious misconduct; hence, the preconditions for God’s acceptance of their sacrifices do not exist. It is noteworthy, however, that both corpora nevertheless associate sacrifice with human-divine reciprocity explicitly. Instead of engaging in gift-exchange with God, these texts assert that humans require initiation into communities of the righteous in accordance with recent and direct revelations from God. This initiation effects reconciliation with God and the resumption of amicable human-divine relations, salvation from imminent eschatological punishments, various character improvements, and, not the least, eternal life. I will argue
that the leaders of these groups were purveyors of a relatively novel form of religiosity, salvation religion, and that they employed bibliically inflected rhetoric about salvation to support of their respective initiatory programs.\textsuperscript{50}

Contemporary scholarship on late Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity has, to my mind, obscured both the relative marginality of salvation religion in this historical context,\textsuperscript{51} as well as the centrality and prevalence of sacrificial-reciprocal religion. In my view, this situation results from several converging factors. First, the salvation religion of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Pauline corpus is highly textual, and most scholars of ancient religion, myself included, are primarily scholars of ancient texts. Second, the historical “triumph” of Christianity has led to the naturalization of salvation religion and the conflation of its particular characteristics and concerns with those of religion in general. Scholars often assume that religion involves such things as conversion, community, faith, revelation, fellowship, eschatology, and, of course, salvation. These are indeed common in our evidence for salvation religion, but they are far less prevalent in our evidence for sacrificial-reciprocal religion. Third, the overwhelming concern in contemporary humanities departments with the issues of “community,” “identity,” and “discourse” has furthered this conflation, even in avowedly secular circles. The unfortunate and unnecessary result of these factors is that salvation religion better fits contemporary scholarly categories of “religion” than does sacrificial-reciprocal religion, with its emphasis on meaty reciprocity, which has been relegated variously to speculative symbolic interpretation, scholarly oblivion, and, occasionally,

\textsuperscript{50} This theory might be of use in understanding the religious, social, and intellectual dynamics behind salvation cults more generally.
\textsuperscript{51} By this I mean salvation religion lacked the clout and numbers it was to achieve centuries later.
outright dismissal.\textsuperscript{52}

On the most general level, I have endeavored for the methodology of this study to be thoroughly empirical. As in all scientific research, I use theories to explain my data and data to substantiate my theories. I have attempted to limit my more speculative observations and hypothetical reconstructions to the concluding paragraphs of my chapters and to the concluding chapter of the study in order to render my arguments maximally falsifiable. On a more specific level, I have employed two methods of textual analysis to adduce evidence for my arguments, philology and rhetorical analysis.\textsuperscript{53} I employ the former to examine the meanings and contexts of Hebrew and Greek sacrificial terms, both verbs and nouns, with close attention to their reciprocal valences and non-cultic usage where these exist. I employ the latter method to investigate the rhetorical contours of philosophical deliberations, cultic prescriptions, historiographic narratives, poetic hymns, metaphors, and other rhetorical texts involving sacrifice. I ask what role a sacrificial offering plays in a given text, for example whether it is part of an expression of gratitude or described as an advocate before God.

Before proceeding to my chapter outlines, I will provide here a brief and schematic outline of my theorization of the sacrificial reciprocal mode of religiosity.

\textsuperscript{52} E.g., Walter Burkert, \textit{Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth} (Trans. Peter Bing; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 57, “The sacrifice, it is known, creates a relationship between the sacrifice and the god; poets recount how the god remembers the sacrifice with pleasure or how he rages dangerously if sacrifices fail to be performed. But all that reaches the sky is the fatty vapor rising in the smoke; to imagine what the gods could possibly do with this leads to burlesque. The ritual simply does not fit the anthropomorphic mythology of the gods.”

\textsuperscript{53} Evidence for my positions will unfortunately be drawn exclusively from ancient textual sources. This is because there is not, as of yet, any inscriptional evidence that illuminates the logic of Judean sacrificial practices in an unproblematic manner. But see: Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, \textit{Before the God in this Place for Good Remembrance: A Comparative Analysis of the Aramaic Votive Inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim} [forthcoming].
Although particular in several ways, I hypothesize that the practical logic of religious reciprocity is based on the logic of reciprocal social exchange (i.e., non-monetary exchange), which is universal among human populations.\(^{54}\) That is, people engage in exchanges of material and social goods with the gods following the same general logic and social protocols that they do when engaging in social exchanges with other people. The particular social position of a given god depends upon its particular characteristics; nevertheless, the gods with whom people most often interact in exchange relationships are usually considered to be superior with respect to power and social status.

Accordingly, similar protocols obtain for this manner of human-divine relationship as would obtain in hierarchical relationships between human subordinates and superiors; requests should be accompanied by displays of respect and reverence as well as expressions of humility and gratitude. This is the social basis of religious “piety.”\(^ {55}\)

The exchange framework of religious reciprocity regularly consists of two or three parties. In this framework, a god might provide one of many possible “blessings” by which I mean hard to come by or non-obvious goods such as health and healing, fertility, rain, wealth, good fortune, change of luck, success in dangerous or risky ventures such as business and war, success in relationships, improvements to personality, etc. In exchange for these religious goods, people might offer expressions of gratitude and tokens of respect such as sacrifices, incense, hymns, votive stele, or other offerings. Priests or other religious specialists often constitute a third party in these frameworks, mediating the divine-human transaction for some material and/or social return. This model constitutes a


\(^{55}\) See Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*, 32-38.
framework of exchange in which the activity of all of the participants flows from everyday human interests, capabilities, and assumptions.

The religious offerings are ideally “pleasing” to the gods, if accepted, though it is often asserted that the gods have no real “need” for the pleasing object, owing to their superiority. In light of this latter detail, social goods, such as the bestowal of honor, are especially appropriate in the context of religious reciprocity and can be imagined to attend most offerings. This connection is apparent in several biblical texts. As for material goods, things that are pleasing to the gods are most often pleasing to humans: food, the smell of roasting meat, incense, wine, valuable objects of silver and gold, a clean and pleasant house, etc. Most offerings are conveyed to the realm of the gods via intelligible but non-obvious methods: the smoke of incense and burnt offerings goes up to the sky, wine offerings are poured onto the ground, sacrificial portions are waved before the altar, prayers are uttered in silence. Sometimes divinatory techniques are employed to determine whether the god has accepted the offering.

In ancient societies whose economies were based primarily on agricultural production, the primary objects of exchange on the part of both gods and humans were closely connected to agriculture: the gods provided rain, fertility and increase; humans returned portions of their herds and harvests to the gods alongside respectful expressions of gratitude and honor. Meat, as the most valuable of agricultural products, often occupied pride of place in the hierarchy of gifts to the gods. In this way sacrificial reciprocity, as a discrete subtype of general religious reciprocity, bears a close connection to the agricultural mode of production and the socio-economic ideologies that undergird

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56 Ex 20:24, 1 Sam 2:29, Isa 43:23, Ps 50:23.
Religious offerings are often accompanied by respectful requests for religious goods or expressions of gratitude for religious goods already received (“prayers”). Contemporary scholarship sometimes puts prayer in opposition with sacrifice, but this is a mistake. Sacrifice provides the god with an attention-grabbing and pleasing gift; it assists in the process of obtaining the religious good specified in the prayer.

In the chapters that follow I will substantiate this theorization with Judean evidence and further elaborate many of its elements. I attempt to show that an enormous quantity of evidence supports the argument that sacrificial reciprocity was central to the Judean religion of the late Second Temple period, and that in most practical respects this religion was similar if not identical to the sacrificial-reciprocal religion of its neighbors. Furthermore, I argue that it is misleading to refer to this manner of religion as “Judaism,” because this term denotes a level of ethno-religious particularity and historical continuity (the “Juda-”) as well as intellectual systematicity (the “-ism”) that is inconsistent with our evidence. I would categorize this religion as Mediterranean sacrificial-reciprocal religion with Judean characteristics such as aniconism and relatively centralized cult.

I provide here a brief summary of the following chapters. In the second chapter I consider the terminology of sacrifice in prescriptive, poetic, and narrative texts of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Greek translations thereof. I argue that the biblical terminology of sacrifice has significant and explicit reciprocal valences. Some of the texts that I treat in this chapter predate the Herodian period by a wide margin; I suggest, however, that the

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58 Data from the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern cultic texts suggests that this was exactly the case in earlier periods of Judean history as well, but attempting to prove this point would exceed the limits of the present project.
reciprocal connotations of many sacrificial terms would have been apparent to readers or listeners in the Herodian period who understood basic Hebrew or Greek. In addition, I show that the terminological association between gifts and sacrifices traverses distinctive changes to lexicon of the cult, evidencing a remarkable degree of conceptual continuity. More specifically, I argue that many of the generic terms for sacrificial offerings are closely related to or identical with non-cultic terms for gifts, and many of the verbs that describe the action of performing sacrifice are also used to describe the giving or offering of non-cultic gifts. In addition, several sacrificial terms presuppose and invoke a framework of human-divine bilateral exchange (“vow,” “thanksgiving,” “penalty”). Furthermore, the concern that sacrifices should be “acceptable” in order that they might be “accounted” to their offerer corroborates their reciprocal functioning. Finally, I argue that some sacrifices function like non-cultic gifts, having the capability to “wipe away” an offense against the receiving party.

In the third chapter I take up the biblical texts that are sometimes portrayed as advancing a prophetic critique of sacrifice (e.g., Amos 5:21-27; Isa 1:10-15). I argue that these texts do not contain some generalized or categorical critique of sacrifice as a mode of religious practice, as many modern scholars have argued. In fact, the biblical texts that portray Yahweh rejecting Israelite or Judean sacrifices in the periods immediately preceding their respective defeats at the hands of Assyria and Babylonia articulate precisely the reciprocal logic of sacrifice. These texts assert that Yahweh is preparing to bring terrible punishments against the Israelites and Judeans on account of various ethical and cultic violations. Yahweh’s rejection of their sacrificial gifts, which is particular to specific historical episodes in the past, stems from this rupture in their relationship and is
embedded in the social logic of reciprocity. In support of this reading, I show that a number of biblical texts state or intimate that the acceptance of both sacrifices and non-cultic gifts is incommensurate with an enduring state of hostility, for it signals relatively favorable relations and a lack of ill will on the part of the receiving party.

In chapter four I analyze various lengthy passages in the writings of Philo of Alexandria on the topic of sacrifice. I argue that these passages consistently treat the offering of sacrifices as a transactional practice by means of which humans endeavor to engage in reciprocal exchanges with God, either to make a request of him or to express gratitude or homage. Philo occasionally subordinates the offering of sacrifices and other material offerings to God in favor of mental demonstrations of gratitude or praise. Such statements do not challenge the reciprocal understanding of sacrifice; rather, they depict human-divine reciprocity in a more idealized and noetic form. Philo also argues that sacrifices and other gifts that people offer with the expectation that they might please or flatter God are not only ineffective but counterproductive, for they are insulting to God. Finally, I argue that Philo’s approach to the topic of sacrifice is continuous with the approach of other Greek philosophers, especially Plato.

In the fifth chapter I analyze the “non-biblical” texts discovered or attested at Qumran. Scholars have noted an apparent incongruity in these texts on the topic of sacrifice. On the one hand, a strong polemic against the Jerusalem Temple priesthood is evidenced in many of these texts, which variously allege that the correct calendar of sacrificial festivals has been forgotten, the Jerusalem Temple defiled, and its priesthood corrupted. These allegations imply that the sacrifices offered at the Jerusalem Temple are unacceptable. On the other hand, these texts never criticize the practice of sacrifice per
se, and various texts contain regulations for performing sacrifice and narrative accounts of exemplary biblical figures offering sacrifices in reciprocal situations. This latter material supports the reciprocal theorization of sacrifice.

Scholars have argued that the Qumran “sectarians” held the Temple cult in high regard, but eventually withdrew from it over controversies involving purity practices and the calendar, perhaps involving the Hasmonean appropriation of the high-priesthood. I interpret these controversies as religious ideology emerging from a context of strategic competition and ideological contestation against the Jerusalem priesthood rather than as purely disinterested religious beliefs whose eventual connection to the priesthood was unintended and coincidental. I adduce four features of these texts in support of this argument. First, the texts never allege that the “incorrect” calendar and purity practices were instituted in recent memory; rather, they project the adoption of these practices into the distant past, long before the rise of the Hasmoneans. Second, the allegations about the calendar and the purity of the Temple each proceeds along its own independent logic to conclusions that carry similarly adverse implications for the priesthood. Third, the texts claim that their leaders have the ability to divine the will of God and to reveal the “hidden things” in Scripture, which suggests that they possessed techniques by which they could produce novel yet authoritative religious discourse in line with their strategic interests. Fourth, the religious program of the texts is not some mere replacement for the Temple cult; rather, it promises eternal life, freedom from the control of evil spirits, perfect wisdom, character improvements, and salvation from Yahweh’s coming day of wrath. No ancient Judean text suggests that these goods were ever sought through offering sacrifice.

In chapter six I consider material pertaining to sacrifice that appears in the Pauline
epistles. I pursue two related arguments. First, I show that several passages in the letters reiterate biblical formulae expressing the reciprocal efficacy of sacrifices as they portray adherence to Paul’s religious program and gifts to Paul and the “holy ones” in Jerusalem as sacrifices that are acceptable and pleasing to God. Other passages in the letters dealing with donations and obedience corroborate the reciprocal aspect of these practices, asserting that God rewards donations generously and that proper conduct is pleasing and acceptable to God. In the second section of the chapter, I take up the question of whether the Pauline epistles articulate a sacrificial theology of Jesus’ death based on biblical ideas about sacrifice and atonement, as numerous scholars of early Christianity have asserted. I argue that this position is premised upon problematic readings of both the Pauline and the Septuagintal evidence and, to the contrary, Paul does not portray Jesus as a sin-sacrifice in any discernable manner in any of the extant letters.

In chapter seven I return to the Pauline epistles and the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus. I argue that each of these corpora alleges that humans have committed grievous offenses against God with the result that he has withdrawn from normal human-divine relations. In fact, God is preparing to bring suit against humankind and to pay them back for their misdeeds in some manner of eschatological judgment. The solution to this calamity that the texts advance underscores the brokenness of the human-divine relationship. Both corpora advocate initiation into the exclusive social formations that are the respective foci of these texts, which initiation effects a thoroughgoing transformation of the essence of the initiate, the restoration of favorable relations with God, escape from God’s punishments, as well as other tangible benefits such as eternal life, personality improvements, and freedom from the control of malevolent divine beings. This chapter is
of relevance to the wider aims of the present study because it helps to situate, both conceptually and socially, Judean religious discourse that advocates salvation rather than the offering of sacrifices.

In chapter eight I consider textual material pertaining to sacrifice that appears in the vast tannaitic rabbinic corpus. I argue that tannaitic texts express no criticism of the practice of sacrifice; to the contrary, they present approving descriptions sacrificial practices, expressions of reverence for the sacrificial service of the Temple, prayers that the Temple service be restored hastily, and exegesis that comments favorably on the efficacy of offering sacrifices in relation to God. Nevertheless, tannaitic texts are remarkable in that they do not treat the offering of sacrifices as the preeminent means of participating in reciprocal relations with God. Instead, tannaitic texts advocate practices such as the study of the Instruction (“Torah”) and rabbinic teachings (“Talmud”), the fulfillment of biblical commandments, and the performance of meritorious acts such as charitable giving. These practices are said to bring about rewards from God directly. I conclude by suggesting that in the rabbinic model the offering of sacrifices is indeed pleasing to God, but only insofar as it represents the fulfillment of a biblical commandment or related religious obligations. This understanding of sacrifice marks a significant departure from “Temple-era” sources, wherein the offering of sacrifices represents a pleasing gesture or favor, and not merely one kind of obedience to biblical texts among hundreds of others.
CHAPTER TWO
The Reciprocal Dimension of the Biblical Terminology of Sacrifice

In this chapter I show that the biblical terminology of sacrifice and elements of its practical logic as portrayed in various prescriptive, poetic, and narrative texts have significant and explicit reciprocal valences. More specifically, I argue that biblical texts furnish cogent evidence that animal sacrifices were understood to belong to a class of gifts for Yahweh and to function as such. I adduce evidence for this argument from both early and late texts of the Hebrew Bible as well as Second Temple period Greek translations thereof; my treatment thus encompasses much of the chronological sweep of the “biblical period,” when sacrifice was central to Judean religion. Indeed, the conceptual association between gifts and sacrifices traverses all significant changes and developments that may be observed in the biblical lexicon of the cult, evidencing a remarkable degree of continuity. My evidence for this position is of five kinds: First, almost all of the various terms employed in biblical texts to refer to sacrificial offerings in a generic, inclusive or categorical manner are closely related to or identical with words that mean “gift,” “present” or “tribute” in non-cultic contexts. Second, many of the verbs that describe the action of performing sacrifice are also used to describe the giving of non-cultic gifts. These first two arguments, which are primarily linguistic and terminological, will draw primarily upon evidence from Hebrew texts but will also
include Greek parallels from the Septuagint.¹ Third, three specific kinds of sacrificial offerings—“thanksgiving” (תודה), “vow” (נֶדוֹר), and “penalty” (אשם)—presuppose and invoke a framework of human-divine reciprocal exchange. Narrative and poetic texts that feature these sacrifices make their reciprocal aspect explicit. Fourth, the concern that sacrifices should be “acceptable” (רָצוֹן) or “accepted” (ירצה) in order that they might be “accounted” (יתָשב) to their offerer speaks to their reciprocal functioning. Fifth, sacrifices function like non-cultic gifts in various biblical portrayals, having the capability to “wipe away” (כפר) an offense committed against the receiving party.² The gift theorization of biblical sacrifice advanced here not only illuminates a durable conceptual association that is central to biblical representations of and prescriptions for ancient Judean religious practice, but also allows for a coherent explanation of the so-called “prophetic critique of sacrifice,” the topic of the following chapter.

The gift theory of biblical sacrifice is not new. In a series of lectures published posthumously in 1925 as Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice, George Buchanan Gray (1865-1922) argued that many kinds of sacrifice were understood to function as gifts for God in ancient Israel and Judah.³ Baruch A. Levine has updated and added further support to Gray’s arguments in both a prolegomenon written for the 1971

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¹ I employ the term “Septuagint” expansively to refer to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible rather than merely the Pentateuch, which was translated first.
² I prefer to translate this term as “penalty sacrifice” rather than “guilt sacrifice,” because the word “guilt” introduces an emotional dimension that is lacking in the Hebrew. See my discussion below, pp.49-50.
³ In light of Akkadian evidence there is now general agreement that the Hebrew verb kippēr derives from a root meaning “wipe away” or “wipe clean.” See Baruch A. Levine, In the Presence of the Lord: a Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 61-64.
republication of Gray’s *Biblical Sacrifice*,\(^5\) and in his own 1974 monograph, *In the Presence of the Lord: a Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel*.\(^6\) In the former work, Levine advances the theory that “the God of Israel desired the sacrifices of his people as a form of tribute to him as their sovereign, in return for which he would grant them the blessings of life.”\(^7\) More recently, Christian Eberhart has added further support to this position:

> Im AT werden Opfer stets als Gabe bezeichnet. Dieser Aspekt ist gemeinsamer Inhalt bzw. gemeinsamer Konnotation der Oberbegriffe קָרֵבָּן, מִנְחָה und אֱשֶׁר. Er wird ferner durch verschiedene kultische Darbringungstermini unterstrichen. Sämtliche Begriffe bringen ferner implizit oder explizit den Bezug “für JHWH” (יהוה) zur Sprache.\(^8\)

Eberhart, Levine, and Gray marshal evidence primarily of a terminological nature in support of their respective positions, pointing out that many of the biblical terms for sacrificial offerings mean “gift” or “present” in Hebrew or in related Semitic languages.\(^9\)

Much contemporary scholarship has tended to briefly acknowledge this point while proffering alternative explanatory approaches to biblical sacrifice that are at once inconclusive—sometimes deliberately so—and excursive, driven by theological or theoretical concerns that are admittedly extraneous to the biblical evidence at hand. Jacob Milgrom’s commentary to Leviticus 1-16 exemplifies this approach. At one point Milgrom acknowledges the salience of the reciprocal dimension of the biblical

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\(^5\) Levine, “Prolegomenon,” xxiii-xxxvi.
\(^7\) Levine, “Prolegomenon,” xxxii.
terminology of sacrifice; at another point he asserts the futility of any effort to theorize sacrifice generally:

The sacrificial system... possesses a distinctive theology (rather, theologies) of its own. No single theory embraces the entire complex of sacrifices. All that can be said by way of generalization is that the sacrifices cover the gamut of the psychological, emotional, and religious needs of the people.

Disregarding in large measure the reciprocal aspect of sacrifice, Milgrom devotes much of his attention to lengthy and speculative discussions of what he calls the “ethical… rationale for the sacrifices,” especially the ḥaṭṭāʾ t (חטא) sacrifice, which Milgrom terms “the purification offering.” Milgrom argues that this sacrifice is steeped in theology and symbolism: “When the priest consumes the ḥaṭṭāʾ t he is making a profound theological statement: holiness has swallowed impurity; life can defeat death. This symbolism carries through all of the rites with the purification offering.” Milgrom admits that he must read between the lines to arrive at his symbolic interpretation of the sacrificial system: “the texts are not always helpful. Nevertheless, hints gleaned from the terminology and the descriptions of the rites themselves will occasionally illuminate our path.” My own position is that biblical texts contain sufficient—albeit imperfect—evidence to mount coherent arguments concerning the practical functioning of sacrifice in ancient contexts, without resorting to reading between the lines or expansive

10 Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (ABD 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 441, “The quintessential sacrificial act... is the transference of property from the profane to the sacred realm, thus making a gift to the deity. That this notion is also basic to Israelite sacrifice is demonstrated by fundamental sacrificial terms that connote a gift, such as mattānāh, qorbān, minḥāh, and īššeh... The motivation of seeking divine aid is attested in many texts, such as ‘Offer to God a thanksgiving offering and pay your vows to the Most High... I will deliver you and you shall glorify me’ (Ps 50:14-15).’”

11 Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 49.


13 Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 638.

14 Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 49.
interpretation. Indeed, I would suggest that the tendency to “discover” intellectually elaborate, emotionally profound, and socially integrative symbolic systems underlying texts dealing with unfamiliar religious practices is ultimately apologetic and distortive.\footnote{I have endeavored to follow the advice of Baruch A. Levine, who “exhorts students of biblical religion to remain faithful to sound philological methodology in treating a subject, which, somehow, tends to draw us away from precise data, and attracts us, almost irresistibly, toward theory and abstraction.” Levine, “Prolegomenon,” xxxvii.}

The approach advocated here also differs from the position that moral atonement and the forgiveness of sins was a primary motivation for the performance of sacrifice, which is especially prevalent among Christian scholars of ancient Judaism.\footnote{E.g., Timothy Wardle, The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity (WUZNT 291; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 18 “at the center of the Jewish religious universe stood the sacrificial system and its provision for atonement and forgiveness.” Ed P. Sanders, Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66CE (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1994), 252, “1. Before sacrificing people had to be purified… 2. Sacrifices atone for sins… in the Jewish sacrificial system the guilt offering, the sin offering and the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement provided for cleansing of impurity and sin.”} Scholars who argue for this perspective typically point to Lev 4-5, Num 5:5-8, and Num 15:22-29, which provide instructions for ḥaṭṭāʾ t and ʾāšām sacrifices. These are frequently—though problematically—rendered as “sin” and “guilt” sacrifices, respectively. James D. G. Dunn exemplifies this approach and situates it within an explicitly Christian interpretive framework:

Regularly sacrificed by individuals were burnt offerings and peace offerings (Lev 1:4, 3:1) and especially sin offerings and guilt offerings (Lev 5). These last two were the principal sacrifices, since they expiated sins and transgressions. As the letter to the Hebrews puts it, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22).”\footnote{Emphasis mine. James D. G. Dunn, Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 53-54.}

My first objection to this statement is that no biblical text—neither Lev 4-5, nor Num 5:5-8, nor Num 15:22-29—claims that ḥaṭṭāʾ t and ʾāšām sacrifices are the principal sacrifices. Moreover, there is general agreement among scholars of the Hebrew Bible that
these sacrifices are prescribed to remedy various kinds of naturally occurring impurity and unwitting or unintentional (בָּשֶׁגָּה) violations of certain “commandments” (מצות) in the case of haṭṭā’ t sacrifices, and misappropriations (מעל) of sancta (i.e., sacrilege) in the case of ʾāšām sacrifices, rather than moral infractions or “sin” in general. The term “commandments” (מצות) in the Priestly and Holiness sources refers to what one might call religious regulations rather than laws of a criminal nature, which are called “judgments” (משפטים).

Thus, the domain of the so-called “sin” and “guilt” sacrifices is actually quite narrow in scope. Moreover, of the hundred or so depictions of sacrifice in biblical narratives not a single one features an individual offering a haṭṭā’ t or ʾāšām sacrifice for an offense that he or she has committed, and this is certainly not for any lack of moral offenses in biblical narratives. Perhaps to make up for this perceived lacuna, two prominent scholars of early Christianity have offered their own narrative renderings of “typical Temple visits” that feature the offering of “guilt sacrifices” to secure “atonement.” In fact, with respect to narrative portrayals, haṭṭā’ t sacrifices appear in only a handful of post-exilic narrative depictions of the purification of the altar of the Jerusalem Temple (2 Chr 29:21-24; Ezra 6:17; 8:35; Neh 10:33); an ʾāšām sacrifice

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18 Lev 5:15, 21; Num 5:6; Ezra 10:2.
19 This includes violating oaths sworn by the name of Yahweh (Lev 5:22).
20 “The term [commandments - מצות] applies only to the religious commandments (fas), not to civil ones (jus), to those enforceable by God, not by man… Thus [commandments] in P (and H) do not include the norms adjudicated and executed by the court but are restricted to those laws which fall solely under the jurisdiction of God.” Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, 230.
21 Eberhart, Studien zur Bedeutung der Opfer, 333, argues that expiatory sacrifices have a preparatory character: “Unter Berücksichtigung des Kontextes von Blutapplikationsriten konnte gezeigt werden, daß Sühneriten stets auf ein anschließendes Opfer am Heiligtum hin orientiert sind.” “Die genaue Untersuchung der alt. Opferrituale hat… gezeigt, daß die Schächtung eines Tieres eher zu den vorbereitenden, nicht aber zu den eigentlichen Handlungen der verschiedenen Opfer im AT gehört” [332].
22 Sanders, Judaism: Practice and Belief, 113-4; Paula Fredriksen, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity (New York: Knopf, 1999), 49.
features in only a single narrative text, Ezra 10:19, where priests offer a penalty ram to rectify the “sacrilege” (_MAILIT) of their having married foreign women (Ezra 10:2, 6, 10).23 The prominence that so-called “sin” and “guilt” sacrifices often receive in scholarly portrayals of the Jerusalem Temple cult has no basis in the Hebrew Bible. I would suggest that this position derives from anachronistic, largely Christian, assumptions and preoccupations concerning the atonement in the precursor to Christianity. Indeed, the earliest source that assumes biblical regulations pertaining to sacrifice (“the Law”) are aimed at achieving purification from sins in some broad sense is the Epistle to the Hebrews.24

My approach also differs from those scholars who argue that biblical terms for sacrificial offerings suggest that “communion” was central to ancient Judean sacrificial practice. E. P. Sanders, for example, writes:

Sacrifices allow for communion with God. This idea is almost demanded by the shared sacrifice [i.e., šēlāmîm], which was divided three ways. The blood was poured out “to the Lord,” and the fat was offered to him by fire; the priest received part of the slaughtered animal and also part of the meal offering that accompanied it; most of the meat was taken outside of the temple and eaten by the offerer and those whom he or she invited… This division may itself point to communion: God, the priests and the worshipper share in the same sacrifice.25

Sanders is correct in most of the details above, though there is no linguistic basis for rendering šēlāmîm as “the shared sacrifice.” The Priestly regulations for šēlāmîm sacrifices (Lev 7:11-21, 29-36) ordain that Yahweh is to receive the blood and the fat of the animal, the priest is to receive the breast and the right thigh, and the remainder of the meat might be removed from sacred precincts, presumably for a festive meal of the kind

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23 This is a likely reconstruction of the grammatically problematic phrase, “being liable (pl.; אשמות) a ram of the flock on account of their liability (על אשמות).”
25 Sanders, Judaism: Practice and Belief, 98.
depicted in 1 Sam 1, wherein the attendees receive a portion of the meat and drink wine.\textsuperscript{26} That this manner of festive meal might bring together one’s kin-group and friends is a reasonable supposition; nevertheless, the assertion that the sacrifice and the attendant meal effect “communion” with God is more problematic. No text in the Hebrew Bible suggests that this or any other kind of sacrifice brings about “communion” (or any semantically related concept) between God and those who consume the sacrificial meat. Indeed, no Hebrew word carrying the meaning “communion” appears in the Hebrew Bible, and the Greek term \textit{koinōnia} does not appear in the Septuagint. There is an ancient Judean source contemporaneous with the Jerusalem Temple that asserts that sacrifices effect some kind of “communion,” but its Christian associations are telling. In 1 Cor 10:18 Paul asserts, “Look at Israel according to the flesh: those who eat the sacrifices are partners (\textit{κοινωνοί}) of the altar.” This statement comes on the heels of a discussion of religious meal practices in which Paul states that there is “communion” (\textit{κοινωνία}) with the blood and body of Christ for participants (1 Cor 10:16). Paul’s statement about Judean sacrifice in v.18 clearly employs terminology and concepts drawn from his own distinctive meal practices. There is no evidence that such concepts informed Judean sacrifice at Jerusalem. I would suggest that the scholarly position that “communion” was central to ancient Judean and Israelite sacrifice derives both from this specific interpretive tradition and from the more basic assumption that clear antecedents to Christian practices exist in ancient Judaism.

It has sometimes been argued that studies based on terminology or etymology are unhelpful for understanding the historical practices that were the referents of the terms under investigation. Ronald Hendel has advanced just such an objection in his critique of Baruch Levine’s philological investigation of the term šělāmîm, and such a critique might be extended to the present chapter as well. Hendel writes:

biblical scholars have generally remained bound to a genealogical method and a theory of essential meanings that tend to preclude consideration of the cultural system. It may be appropriate to borrow a methodological caution from the study of linguistics: one ought not to confuse the history of a language with its use… to understand the meaning of a word we must look at the use of that word within the system of a language, not solely at its history or etymology. We ought to be weary of the search for essential meanings; in religion as in language, meaning is determined by use.\(^\text{27}\)

The caution with respect to etymology that Hendel stresses in this passage is appropriate; the etymological basis of a term for a practice does not determine the shape of that practice. There are, nevertheless, several factors that justify my approach. First, alongside philological and etymological evidence I consider the logic of sacrificial practice as portrayed in all pertinent narrative, poetic, and prescriptive texts; I consider the occasions, motivations, and effects of sacrifice in biblical portrayals. This allows for consideration of sacrifice as a purposive, meaningful undertaking, at least as envisioned by various biblical authors. Second, wherever possible I consider the terminology under investigation (i.e., “tribute”) in both cultic and non-cultic contexts and consider whether the etymology of the term accords with its usage in both contexts. This kind of semantic convergence sheds light on the practical connotations of a given term without resorting to “essential meanings.” Third, the philological evidence treated here embraces historical

dynamism. Indeed, one of my strongest pieces of evidence is the remarkable continuity of
the association between gifts and sacrifices that obtains across the historical scope of the
present study: for perhaps 1000 years or more, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek speaking
Judeans who practiced sacrifice referred to their sacrifices employing various
instantiations of the terminology of gift-giving.

I begin my presentation of evidence with a treatment of the generic Hebrew terms
for sacrificial offerings. These are terms that are used in an inclusive manner to classify
more specific kinds of offerings such as “ascending offerings” or “slain offerings.” To the
best of my knowledge, the Hebrew Bible employs six such terms: minḥāh, qorbān,
ʾiššeh, mattānāh, qōdāšîm, and leḥem. Mainstream scholars of the Hebrew Bible have
concluded that all but the latter two of these terms are closely related to or identical with
words that mean “gift, “present,” or “tribute” in Hebrew or in cognate Semitic languages
such as Akkadian or Ugaritic. This is a significant point as it suggests that the native
categorization of sacrificial offerings was as a class of gifts. The latter terms, qōdāšîm
and leḥem, mean “holy things” and “food” respectively, but neither term challenges or
undermines the gift aspect of the other terms. Indeed, in the Priestly and Holiness sources
of the Pentateuch (“P” and “H”) and in Ezekiel, these terms appear alongside and often in
apposition with gift terms, suggesting that sacrifices were understood more specifically as “gifts of holy food.”

The term *minḥāh* is especially significant because it appears frequently in both cultic and non-cultic contexts. With respect to derivation, “Hebrew *minḥāh* is anticipated by Ugaritic *mnḥ (t)*,” which means “tribute, offering.” In cultic contexts in the Hebrew Bible the term has two distinct usages. In P, H, Ezekiel and some other sources, the term refers to offerings composed of grain that are prescribed and portrayed as necessary accompaniments to animal sacrifices for Yahweh. In a variety of other texts, both early and late, the term *minḥāh* is used to refer to sacrifices more generally, including animal sacrifices. The parade example of such usage is Gen 4:3-5, which describes both Cain’s offering to Yahweh “from the fruit of the earth” (v. 3, 5) as well as Abel’s offering “from the firstlings of his flock and their fat” (v. 4) as *minḥāh* for Yahweh. In this J narrative *minḥāh*, then, refers to both vegetable and animal offerings for Yahweh. In Num 16:15, another J text, Moses refers to incense offerings as *minḥāh*. Inclusive usage also occurs in Judges 6:18-21, wherein the term *minḥāh* refers to both

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28 For example: “all their gifts of holy things” (כֶּלֶם קְדֶשֶׁי; Ex 28:38); “an offering of food for Yahweh” (לְחֵם אֵלֶיה; Lev 3:11); “a food offering for a pleasing odor” (לְחֵם אֱשֶׁר לְרִיחֲךָ; Lev 3:16); “the offerings of Yahweh, the food of their god” (לְחֵם אלֵיהוּ מַכְרֶשׁ וְכַדְשֵׁי; Lev 21:6); “the food of his God, of the holiest of the holy things and the holy things” (לְחֵם אֱלֵיהוּ מַכְרֶשׁ הוּא וְכַדְשֵׁי; Lev 21:22); “an offering for Yahweh, an ascending offering and libations” (לְחֵם אֱלֵיהוּ עֲלוֹת וְמַנָּחַת; Lev 23:37); “this is yours from the holiest of the holiest things, reserved from the fire: all their presents, all their tribute, all their *ḥattāʾ*’t sacrifices [ַחֲטָאת] and all their penalty sacrifices…” (Num 18:9); “my present, my food, that is, my offerings of pleasing aroma” (קְרָבִּין לְחֵם אֱשֶׁר לְרִיחֲךָ; Num 28:2); “when you present my food, fat and blood… you have not kept the charge of my holy things” (Ezek 44:7-8).

29 Because the meaning of this term is the subject of the present inquiry I shall leave it untranslated until it has been sufficiently illuminated.

30 On this term and its translation, see Eberhart, *Studien zur Bedeutung der Opfer*, 77-88.

31 Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord*, 17.

32 Lev 2 provides instructions for standalone offerings of unleavened grain, though this kind of offering does not appear in any biblical narrative.
unleavened cakes and the flesh of a kid goat. In 1 Sam 2:17, which criticizes the cultic practices of the priestly descendants of Eli, the term refers to animal sacrifices: “The sin of the young men was very great with respect to Yahweh, for they dealt disdainfully with Yahweh’s minḥāh.” According to the earlier verses (13-16) the priests were taking their own portions of the slain offerings (₦aḥ, v.13) before the fat could be burned as Yahweh’s portion. In Malachi, usually dated to the late sixth or early fifth century, minḥāh likewise refers generically to animal offerings. This can be clearly seen in Mal 1:13, in which Yahweh states: “You have brought that which was stolen, lame, and sick; thus you have brought minḥāh. Should I accept it from your hands?” The concern with minḥāh that is sick and lame makes it clear the term implies an animal referent.  

In 1 Sam 26:19 minḥāh refers to a sacrificial offering for Yahweh in a generic manner without specifying its content. This text describes a gesture on the part of David to make peace with Saul: “If Yahweh has stirred you [Saul] against me [David], let him smell (ירח) minḥāh, but if it is men, let them be cursed…” In a few other texts minḥāh also refers generically to offerings for Yahweh without specifying their substance. Usage of minḥāh as a generic term for sacrificial offerings thus appears across a wide chronological spectrum.

As for non-cultic usage of minḥāh, 32 of 33 occurrences correspond closely with the English word “tribute,” referring to gifts that subordinates and suppliants offer to powerful and potentially dangerous political or military figures. It is noteworthy that the

33 The term appears similarly in Mal 1:10 and 2:13.
34 2 Chr 32:23; Zeph 3:10; Ps 96:8.
language of service (רשד), which is prevalent also in cultic contexts, is closely associated with the provision of non-cultic minḥāh. In Judges 3:12-18, King Eglon of Moab receives minḥāh from Israelites who were “serving” (עבד) him after suffering military defeat at his hands. Similarly, in 2 Sam 8/1 Chr 18, King David receives minḥāh from the Moabites (v.2) and Arameans (v.6) who “became servants” (עבדים) to David, bringing minḥāh” after being defeated in battle. Similarly associating military defeat with the provision of minḥāh, Hos 10:6 prophesies that the glory of “Bet Aven,” likely a polemical reference to Bethel, will be brought as minḥāh from vanquished Israel to the Assyrian king. 1 Kgs 5:1 reports that the kingdoms under Solomon’s rule “were bringing tribute and serving (рабים) Solomon all the days of his life.” 1 Kgs 10:25/2 Chr 9:24 lists the kinds of minḥāh that were delivered to Solomon “year by year” (שנה שנה): vessels of silver and gold, garments, weaponry, spices, horses and mules. Ps 72:10-11 states: “The kings of Tarshish and islands will send [Solomon] minḥāh / The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer payments / All kings will bow to him / All nations will serve him (עבדוהו).” Ps 45:13 states that wealthy people will supplicate the daughter of Tyre with minḥāh. In 2 Kgs 20:12/Isa 39:1, Merodach Baladan of Babylon sends minḥāh and a document to Hezekiah, apparently to solidify their alliance before Hezekiah was to lead an uprising against Assyria. 2 Chr 17:5 relates that “all Judah brought Jehoshaphat minḥāh, and he had wealth and honor in abundance (לרבוכו).” Verse 11 reports that certain Philistines and Arabians, in “terror of Yahweh (פחד יהוה)” (v10), brought Jehoshaphat minḥāh. 2 Chr 26:6-15, which details the successful military

36 This is especially so in the Exodus narrative (e.g., Ex 3:12, 4:23, 7:16, 8:1, 20, 9:1, Ex 23:24) and Deuteronomy (e.g., 4:28, 7:4, 16, 12:2, 28:64) but occurs elsewhere as well (2 Kgs 17:35; 21:3; 2 Chr 33:16, 22; Is 43:23).
accomplishments of king Uzziah, mentions that the Ammonites brought Uzziah minḥāh. In all of these instances, minḥāh refers to tribute rendered to powerful and dangerous political rulers. Another relevant point of continuity between cultic and non-cultic tribute is chronological regularity. Two texts mention minḥāh being delivered to human leaders on a set schedule, “year by year” (שנה שנה, 1 Kgs 10:25; 2 Kgs 17:3-4). Although the interval is different, several texts refer to morning and evening minḥāh offered to Yahweh (1 Kgs 18:29; 2 Kg 3:20, 36; Ps 141:2).

Just as the provision of minḥāh is associated with acceptance of political rule, several biblical texts associate a lack or cessation of minḥāh with rejection of a leader’s rule and rebellion. A clear example is 2 Kings 17:3-4: “Shalmaneser king of Assyria went up against [Hoshea], and Hoshea became his servant (עבד) and sent him minḥāh. But the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea, because [Hoshea] sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and he did not offer minḥāh to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year (שנה שנה), and the king of Assyria seized him and incarcerated him in prison.” In a similar vein, 1 Sam 10:27 reports that at the time of Saul’s anointment, certain people despised him (ריבווהו) and “did not bring him minḥāh.”

Not only kings but other kinds of political figures also receive minḥah. In Gen 32-33, Jacob and his servants offer minḥāh (32:14, 19, 33:10-11) to Jacob’s brother Esau, who is approaching with 400 men (32:7). Jacob is in fear for his life (32:12) because he knows that Esau is angry with him and planning to kill him (27:38-45). Although Esau is not presented with a title, his 400 men suggest that he possesses significant military power. In addition to offering minḥāh to Esau, Jacob also refers deferentially to Esau as “my lord” (אדני, 32:5, 6, 19; 33:8, 13, 14, 15), declares his servitude to Esau on several
occasions (習ם, 32:5, 19, 21; 33:5; 习ם, 14), and bows low seven times (33:3). While the occurrences of *minḥāh* in this narrative are rarely rendered as “tribute” in English translations, the context actually displays many of the features of tribute relationships in the political realm.\(^\text{37}\)

Another largely unrecognized instance in which usage of *minḥāh* corresponds to “tribute” is Gen 43:11-26. This passage relates that Joseph’s brothers offered *minḥāh* to Joseph during their attempt to buy food from him during a famine. As in the previous example, the provision of *minḥāh* in this text is part of a strategy to placate its intended receiver. Indeed, all of the hallmarks of tribute relationships are present in this narrative. Joseph’s brothers are fearful of being enslaved by Joseph (43:18) because they think they are suspected of theft from a previous encounter (42:27, 35). The brothers bow to Joseph (43:26, 28) and employ deferential terms of address, referring to Joseph as “my lord” (אדני; 43:20) and to their father as “your servant” ( العبך; 43:28). For his part, Joseph is person of high political rank, the governor of Egypt (參, 41:44; 参, 42:6).

The lone exception to the pattern of *minḥāh* referring to tribute is only a partial exception: 2 Kings 8:8-9 refers to gifts from King Ben Hadad of Aram to the prophet Elisha as *minḥāh*. While this is not a context in which we might expect the provision of tribute, three features of the text are suggestive of tribute relations: the gifts are suitable for a king, “everything good from Damascus, forty camels burden;” the provider of the

\(^{37}\) Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord*, 17.
*minḥāh* employs deferential language, referring to King Ben Hadad as “your son;”38 and Elisha is depicted elsewhere as being a powerful prophet and dangerous wonderworker.

That the term *minḥāh* consistently means “tribute” in non-cultic settings in texts stemming from a wide variety of genres and periods suggests that the connotations of tribute would have been present in cultic settings, and that the offering of *minḥāh* was understood at least in part as participating in a tribute relationship with Yahweh. The reciprocal aspect of the provision of tribute is clear; it functions as part of an exchange relationship between a suzerain and a vassal in which the vassal provides honor, deference, loyalty, and tribute gifts in exchange for benign relations with the suzerain, protection, and safety from its destructive capabilities. Suzerain-vassal tributary relationships were commonplace in Ancient West Asia and are well attested in Akkadian epigraphic data and elsewhere.39 The conceptual framework of these political relationships, I suggest, also framed people’s relations with Yahweh and informed their practice of sacrifice. Indeed, biblical texts depict Yahweh as a king especially deserving of tribute, being more dangerous and more honorable than any human king.40 Mal 1:14 makes this point explicit, concluding an extended criticism of the Israelites’ offering of

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38 The Hebrew word “son” (בֶּן) expresses subordination in Josh 7:19, 1 Sam 4:16, 2 Sam 18:22.
39 For example, a letter to Sargon II mentions tribute rendered by Egypt, Gaza, Judah, Moab and Ammon, all of whom were vassals of Assyria. Simo Parpola, ed. *The Correspondence of Sargon II: Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West* (State Archives of Assyria Vol.1; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1987) 92. For other ancient correspondence in which the imposition of tribute is part and parcel of the suzerain’s political dominion, see, Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (State Archives of Assyria Vol.2; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988) xx, xxii. The extant suzerain-vassal treaties themselves do not mention the provision tribute, which may have been too sensitive a topic to appear in public treaties. Likewise, the Aramaic Sefire treaty inscriptions also evidence a suzerain-vassal relationship, but tribute is not mentioned directly. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967).
40 There are a great many texts that treat Yahweh as a king, e.g., Num 23:21; Jer 10:7, 10; Zeph 3:15; Zech 14:9; Ps 5:2; 29:10; 47:2, 6-8; 48:1; 68:24; 74:12; 95:3; 98:6; 145:1.
inferior tribute (minhāh) to Yahweh with the exasperated exhortation, “I am a great king… my name is feared in the nations.”

In P, H and Ezekiel, where minhāh refers specifically to offerings made of grain, different words function as generic terms for sacrificial offerings. The most prominent of these is qorbān, which appears some 80 times. This word derives from the root q-r-b, which in its simple verbal form means “draw near, approach,” and in its causative verbal form means “bring near, present, offer.” The noun qorbān appears very frequently as the cognate accusative object of the causative form of the verb, thus rendering its meaning, “that which is brought near, presented, offered,” a present or offering. Interestingly, the term qorbān does not appear in any biblical text outside of Leviticus, Numbers and Ezekiel, and its usage in these texts is exclusively cultic. Several aspects of biblical treatment of qorbān offerings indicate that they were understood to function as instruments of reciprocal exchange, that is, as presents. First, the verb with which the term is most closely related and most frequently paired, hiqrīb, is used frequently in non-cultic contexts to describe the conveying of gifts to a human recipient: “He offered (ויקרב) the tribute (מנחה) to Eglon king of Moab…” (Judg 3:17). While the noun qorbān appears only in relatively late texts, usage of the verb hiqrīb with the sense of giving or presenting appears in Judg 5:25, likely one of the earliest texts of the Hebrew Bible: “Water he asked, milk she gave / In a regal bowl she presented (הקריבה) curd.” Cultic usage of the verb does not differ in any noticeable respect, aside from the fact that the indirect object of the verb is Yahweh. The beginning of the Priestly presentation of

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41 Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 145.
42 Cognate verbs in Akkadian (D stem qurrubu) and Ugaritic (ṣqrḫ) function in the same manner. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 145.
sacrificial regulations in Leviticus employs both the verb *hiqrîb* and the noun *qorbân* in the straightforward manner described above: “When one of you offers (הָקִיב) a *qorbân* (קרבון) to Yahweh (יְהוָה), offer your *qorbân* from cattle, that is, from the herd or from the flock” (Lev 1:2). In addition to such pairing with a common verb of gift exchange, regulations pertaining to *qorbân* sacrifices exhibit further reciprocal characteristics. A person who is to offer an animal as a *qorbân* sacrifice is required to signal his ownership of the animal in order that it might be credited to him: “He shall lay his hand on the head of the ascending offering in order that it might be accepted on his behalf (וְלֹא וָרָכָה)” (Lev 1:4).43 The laying of the hand on the animal seems analogous in function to affixing a card that states the name of the giver of a present in contemporary gift-giving practice. That the *qorbân* offering is to be “accepted” further speaks to its reciprocal functioning. The evidence in support of the identification of *qorbân* sacrifices as presents is clear: from a linguistic standpoint *qorbân* means “present,” *qorbân* sacrifices are offered and accepted like presents, and they are credited to their initial owner’s behalf like presents.

Of all the terms for sacrificial offerings that which has the clearest and most obvious reciprocal connotations is *mattânâh* “gift.” This word derives from the Hebrew root *n-t-n* “give” just as the English word “gift” derives from the verb “give.” In non-cultic contexts *mattânâh* can refer to a gift given by a father to a son (Gen 25:6; Ezek 46:16; 2 Chr 21:3) or servant (Ezek 46:17), or gifts to the poor (Esth 9:22). The term *mattânâh* also refers to gifts of a more abstract nature. Num 18:6 refers to the Levites as a gift for the Aaronid priests. Num 18:7 refers to the bestowal of the priesthood upon Aaron and his sons as a “gift of service” (מתנה ועבדת). Two wisdom texts criticize gifts for

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43 Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 152.
their capacity to corrupt, apparently by virtue of the fact that they obligate the receiver of
the gift to reciprocate in kind: “a gift (מַתָּנָה) destroys the mind” (Eccl 7:7); “one who
hates gifts (מַתָּנָה) will live” (Prov 15:27). Cultic usage of the term mattānāh is significant
though somewhat infrequent. Num 18:29 refers to the tithes due to the Levites as gifts
(מַתָּנָה). Three pentateuchal texts from three different sources refer to sacrifices for
Yahweh as gifts. The first is Exod 28:38, part of the Priestly description of the high
priestly mitre: “[The mitre] shall sit upon Aaron's head, and Aaron shall bear the
responsibility for the sacra (קדשים) that the Israelites sanctify, that is, all their sacred gifts
(כָּל מַתָּנָת קָדְשֵׁיהֶם). The mitre shall always be upon Aaron's forehead, in order that they
might be acceptable (לרצון) in the presence of Yahweh.” Underscoring the importance of
reciprocity in cultic activities, one of the chief responsibilities of the Aaronid priesthood
is to ensure that the “sacred gifts” of the Israelites are accepted. That this passage
employs the word “gifts” to gloss the meaning of “sacra” suggests that gifts were readily
intelligible in a sacrificial context. The second pentateuchal text that employs the term
“gifts” is Lev 23:37-38, a summary statement of H’s cultic calendar: “(v.37) These are
Yahweh's appointed times, which you shall announce as sacred assemblies, offering a gift
(אֲשֶׁר) to Yahweh—an ascending offering (עָלֶה), tribute (מָנָח), a slain offering (זָבח)
and libations (נסכים)—each matter on its day. (v.38) This is aside from Yahweh's Sabbaths,
and aside from your gifts (מַתָּנָה), and aside from all your vows, and aside from all your
voluntary offerings, which you shall give (תתנו) to Yahweh.” Verse 37 summarizes
preceding sections of the chapter that enumerate the particular sacrifices for the various
festivals. Verse 38 makes the point that the festivals are also occasions for Sabbath
offerings and private sacrifices. The common element of all the items in verses 37 and 38
appears to be that they are kinds of sacrifice, classified by occasion. Finally, despite some syntactic difficulties, Deut 16:16-17 appears not only to refer to sacrificial offerings as gifts for Yahweh, but also to articulate the logic of human-divine reciprocal exchange in a remarkably clear manner:

Three times a year every one of your males shall appear before Yahweh your God in the place that he will choose: the festival of Unleavened Bread, the festival of Weeks, and the festival of Booths. He shall not appear before Yahweh empty handed. A man’s gift (תָּנָתֶת יד) is to correspond to the blessing that Yahweh, your God, has given you. The pilgrimage festivals are occasions to reciprocate Yahweh by means of gifts in return for the blessings he has provided.

The term ’iššeh appears 62 times in P and H and three times in Deuteronomistic texts. In P the term frequently appears in summary statements that follow instructions for certain kinds of sacrifices. For example, “the priest shall turn [the pigeon or dove] into smoke upon the altar… it is an ascending offering, an ’iššeh of pleasing aroma for Yahweh” (Lev 1:17); “the priest shall turn [Yahweh’s portions of the penalty ram] into smoke upon the altar as an ’iššeh for Yahweh; it is a penalty sacrifice (אשם)” (Lev 7:5).

In light of such passages, scholars have frequently sought derivation of this term from the word ’eš “fire,” yielding “fire offering” or “offering by fire.” As Jacob Milgrom has

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44 Cultic usage of mattânāh also occurs in Ezek 20:39, where it refers to “idolatry.” Similar usage of the term qorbân occurs in Ezek 20:28.
45 The syntactic difficulty lies in v. 17: אִשׁ מַתְנָתִי יָד מִכָּל הָאֵלֶּה אֶל-נֶפֶשׁ תִּנְקֵל.
46 Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), overlooks the reciprocal aspect of the passage: “Deuteronomy ordains… that each celebrant should bring whatever offering his means allow and in whatever way he sees fit” [221].
47 Deut 18:1, and twice in the Deuteronomistic history, Josh 13:14 and 1 Sam 2:28.
48 E.g., Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, 9-11; Levine, In the Presence of the Lord, 48; Eberhart, Studien zur Bedeutung der Opfer, 40-48. All of these scholars are aware of the problems of this derivation.
argued, several factors render this derivation problematic.\(^{49}\) First, some of the sacrificial items termed ʾiššeh are not consigned to the altar flames. Lev 24:9 refers to the showbread (פְּנֵי לֶחֶם, Ex 25:30) as a kind of ʾiššeh and ordains that the priests are to eat it within sacred precincts. Likewise, Lev 7:30-35 refers to the breast and thigh portions of šelāmîm offerings as ʾiššeh, and specifically stipulates that they are not to be burned because they belong to the priests. Num 15:10 calls wine libations a kind of ʾiššeh, and Num 28:7 specifies that libations are to be poured out in sacred precincts. Conversely, ḥattāʾt sacrifices, parts of which are indeed consigned to the altar for incineration, are never termed ʾiššeh. In the three Deuteronomistic texts in which the term ʾiššeh appears, it refers to offerings that are to provide an inheritance for the Levites: “The Levitical priests—all the tribe of Levi—shall have no portion and no inheritance with Israel. Yahweh’s ʾiššeh (יָהוָה אַשֶּׁר) are their inheritance, these they shall eat.”\(^{50}\) Ugaritic evidence supplies an apparent cognate for Hebrew ʾiššeh that resolves some of these difficulties.\(^{51}\) Ugaritic texts attest the noun ʾu, likely vocalized as *ʾittatu, which apparently means “gift, present, offering.”\(^{52}\) This word is linguistically similar to Hebrew ʾiššeh, except that it is feminine in gender. This derivation yields the rendering


\(^{50}\) Deut 18:1. My translation follows LXX. MT has “and his inheritance they shall eat” (יָאכְלוֹן וְנַחֲלָתוֹ). The other D texts (Josh 13:14; 1 Sam 2:28) are close variations on this statement.


of ʾiššeh as “gift, offering.” This rendering, while not certain, fits biblical usage of ʾiššeh and obviates the problems associated with the rendering, “fire-offering.”

Comparative linguistic evidence also provides useful evidence for reconstructing the derivation of another cryptic sacrificial term, šelem /šēlāmîm. This term has presented difficulties for translators of the Hebrew Bible since at least the time of the Septuagint, owing to the considerable semantic breadth of words having the root š-l-m. In various common instantiations words derived from this root can mean “pay,” “whole,” “peace,” and “greeting,” and both ancient and modern translators have employed each of these meanings in various renderings of šēlāmîm (i.e., “payment/tribute sacrifice,” “whole sacrifice,” “peace/wellbeing sacrifice,” “greeting sacrifice”). Whereas šēlāmîm occurs exclusively in cultic contexts in the Hebrew Bible, Akkadian and Ugaritic texts evidence parallel terms that appear in both cultic and non-cultic, gift-giving contexts. Ugaritic šlmm is particularly noteworthy because it appears frequently in a construction that has a close Hebrew parallel. Ugaritic texts yield the pairing šrp (w)šlmm (“burnt offering and šlmm”) which is a close analogue to the Hebrew pairing ʿōlāh ĕšēlāmîm (“ascending offering and šēlāmîm”). In the Kirta epic šlmm occurs twice and refers to

53 While the possibility that the term ʾiššeh derives from gift terminology lends modest support to the wider argument of the present chapter, I readily admit that there is no indication that the biblical authors who employed the term were aware of this linguistic connection. There is also no indication that this derivation was known in the late Second Temple period.

54 The term occurs in what appears to be a plural form except for Amos 5:22, which evidences the singular, šelem. This singular šlm is common in Punic tariffs of the 4th or 3rd centuries BCE. Levine, In the Presence of the Lord, 5.

55 Levine, In the Presence of the Lord, 3-4. See also, Eberhart, Studien zur Bedeutung der Opfer, 89-112.

56 Levine, In the Presence of the Lord, 8-9.
tribute rendered to a human king (KTU III 26-27). In Akkadian, a corresponding noun, šulmānu, also occurs in both cultic and non-cultic contexts. In the latter, it refers to gifts intended to bring about the receiver’s well-being or to establish peaceful relations (šulmu) with their receiver. While in some instances these gifts appear to function as tribute, more frequently they are exchanged between kings who are equals (aḫḫū; “brothers”). While there is insufficient evidence to prove that Hebrew šelāmîm derives from either Ugaritic šlmm or Akkadian šulmānu, the existence of these parallel terms suggests that šelāmîm derives from gift-giving terminology.

The linguistic and conceptual affinity between sacrifices and non-cultic gifts finds further support from the fact that many of the verbs frequently employed to describe the conveying of sacrificial offerings to Yahweh are also employed to describe the conveying of non-cultic gifts to human recipients. The verb hiqrîb, “bring near, offer,” discussed above in connection with the term qorbān, is used some 127 times—primarily in Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel—to describe the offering of sacrifices to Yahweh. The same verb is used to describe the conveying of tribute to human subjects on three occasions (Jud 3:17-18; Mal 1:8; Ps 72:10). The verb higgîš also means “bring near, offer,” and is also used to describe the conveyance of both sacrifices and non-cultic gifts. The verb heʿēlä “cause to ascend, raise” is used 47 times in a wide variety of biblical texts to describe the conveyance of offerings upwards, either to God in the

58 Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 224-225; Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord*, 16.
60 As with the term ʾiṣṣeh, there is no indication that the biblical authors who employed this term were aware of these philological considerations.
heavens or onto the altar for burning. The same verb is employed in 2 Kings 17:4 to describe the offering of tribute (מנחה) to Shalmaneser king of Assyria. Another verb meaning “raise,” nāšāʾ, is similarly used to describe the conveyance of both cultic (Ezek 20:31) and non-cultic gifts (2 Sam 8:2, 6). In addition, one can “give” (נתן) sacrifices to Yahweh (Lev 23:38, Eccl 4:17) just as one can “give” gifts outside of the cultic sphere (e.g., Gen 34:12). Finally, one can “bring” (הביא) tribute to Yahweh (Gen 4:3-4) just as one can “bring” tribute to a human kings (1Sam 10:27).

The exchange dimension of sacrifice is further evidenced by several of the terms for specific kinds of sacrificial offerings, principally “vow” ( נדר), “thanksgiving” (תודה), and “penalty” (אשם). These kinds of offerings both invoke a bilateral framework of human-divine reciprocity in their terminology and function as a means by which humans reciprocate favors from Yahweh in narrative and poetic texts. As for vow offerings, these are to be “paid” (שלם) to Yahweh when the conditions of a vow have been satisfied.

Biblical texts portray vows as impromptu verbal contracts uttered in situations of danger. Narrative texts furnish a few examples of vows uttered in the first person: “If Yahweh returns me [Absalom] to Jerusalem, I will serve (ועבדתי) Yahweh” (2 Sam 15:8); “If God is with me [Jacob], and guards me on my way, and gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, and I return in safety to my father’s house, then Yahweh will become my god, and this stone that I have set up as a pillar shall become a temple of God [i.e., Bethel]...” (Gen 28:20-22). The logic of the vow is unmistakably reciprocal: if Yahweh brings about the situation stipulated in the vow, then the person who uttered the vow owes Yahweh a sacrifice or another stipulated return. Biblical texts urge that vows be paid quickly:

“When you make a vow to your god Yahweh do not be late in paying it (لزمלאה), for
Yahweh will surely seek it out and it will be a fault on your account” (Deut 23:22).

Similarly: “When you make a vow to God do not be late in paying it (לשלמו), for he takes no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed! It is better that you do not vow than vow and not repay” (Eccl 5:3-4). Like sacrifices offered in fulfillment of vows, sacrifices offered in thanks are reciprocal in both their terminology and their portrayed functioning. On some occasions it is difficult to draw a distinction between vow and thank offerings. For example, the end of Jonah’s prayer states: “Let me sacrifice to you in a voice of thanks / What I have vowed I will pay / Salvation is Yahweh’s” (Jonah 2:10). In 2 Chr 33:16, Manasseh sacrifices slain offerings of the šělāmīm and thanksgiving types (שלמים ותודה בודה) after Yahweh returns him to Jerusalem from Babylon, where he was a captive of the Assyrian military.

Many psalmic texts similarly portray thank offerings as an appropriate response to Yahweh’s provision of deliverance from dangerous situations. Ps 50, for example, states: “Sacrifice a thank offering to God and pay your vows to the most high / call upon me in a day of distress; I will deliver you and you will honor me (v14-15)...

One who sacrifices a thank offering honors me...” (v.23). Ps 107 speaks of Yahweh delivering people from the thirst and hunger of desert wanderings (v.5), captivity in the “shadow of death” (v.10, 14), and storms at sea (v.28). It also speaks of Yahweh blessing people, causing them to multiply, and not reducing their cattle (v.38). In response to such blessings, the psalm exhorts: “Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his loyalty and his wondrous deeds for humans / Let them sacrifice slain offerings of thanksgiving and recount his deeds in song (vv.21-22).” Ps 116 poses the question: “How

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63 Nah 2:1 also urges the repayment of vows.
can I repay Yahweh for all the benefits garnered upon me?” (v.12), and replies: “To you I will sacrifice a slain offering of thanksgiving and proclaim the name of Yahweh / I will pay my vows to Yahweh in the presence of all his people” (vv.17-18). According to these various texts, slain thank offerings are a fitting response to a multitude of divine favors.

The reciprocal dimension of sacrifice is not limited to exchanges of favorable services in the manner of *quid pro quo* or “one good turn deserves another.” In several texts of the Priestly and Holiness sources of the Pentateuch, an ʾāšām “penalty” ram sacrifice is prescribed to compensate for certain misappropriations (טיהב) of property (Lev 19:20-21) and especially acts of sacrilege against sacra, Yahweh’s property (Lev 5:14-26; Num 5:5-8; Ezra 10). I prefer to translate the term ʾāšām as “penalty (sacrifice)” rather than the conventional rendering, “guilt (sacrifice)” because the latter connotes the emotional state of having willfully committed an offense whereas the former connotes being subject to punitive pecuniary obligations regardless of emotional state, which better fits our evidence.64 Ezra 10:1-19 does mention the emotional states of those who are liable for having committed sacrilege (טיהב; vv.2, 10), though words other than ʾāšām are employed as descriptors: Ezra “mourns” (v.6) and “weeps” (v.1), the priests “tremble” (v.9). Interestingly, in sources often considered earlier than P and H, violations of sacra are compensated for with ʾāšām penalties that are not sacrifices. 1 Sam 4:11-6:16 describes the Philistines’ capture and return of Yahweh’s ark, his preeminent item of property. When the Philistines are in possession of the ark, the hand of Yahweh falls heavily on them (5:6), and Yahweh attacks the residents of the Philistine cities that play

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64 Lev 5:15-26; Num 5:5-8; Lev 19:20-21; 1 Sam 26; 2 Kgs 12:16.
host to the ark with boils (5:6-12). The Philistines consult with “priests and diviners” about what to do with the ark (6:2), and receive the following advice:

If you send back the ark of the God of Israel do not send it empty; rather, you must send back punitive compensation (אשם; i.e., the payment of a penalty) for him. Then you will be healed and it shall be known among you why his hand has turned away from you (6:3).

For this compensatory penalty, which “gives honor (כבוד) to the God of Israel” (5:5), the Philistines send five golden boils and five golden mice, one for each of the five Philistine cities (6:17). The compensation is apparently effective, although this is not spelled out in the text. In this case, the provision of ʾāšām addresses a negative balance on the reciprocal scale, one that Yahweh was acting on in punishing the Philistines. In another relatively early text ʾāšām penalties are monetary (2 Kgs 12:17). In Priestly texts where the āšām primarily takes the form of a ram sacrifice, this pecuniary association is not lost:

If someone commits an act of sacrilege, committing an unwitting offense against Yahweh’s sacra, he shall bring as his penalty (אשם) an unblemished ram of the flock according to your valuation in silver shekels in accordance with the shekel of the sanctuary as a penalty (לأمن; Lev 5:16).

The result of the provision of a penalty sacrifice, along with restitution of the value of the misappropriated sacred object (plus a fifth), is that “[the sacrilege] shall be forgiven on his behalf” (לונסלח; Lev 5:16, 18, 26). Forgiveness is a reciprocal concept, as it entails the annulment or pardon of a negative balance on a reciprocal scale.

The biblical regulations for ḥattāʾt, sacrifices also have a reciprocal element, although this appears to be secondary. As Jacob Milgrom has argued at length, the primary purpose of the ḥattāʾt sacrifice seems to be purification. The word ḥattāʾt is a

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65 This text also mentions ḥattāʾt money.
66 Eberhart, *Studien zur Bedeutung der Opfer*, 174-176, also interprets this manner of sacrifices as “gifts for God” (Gabe für JHWH).
piel derivative, and the piel form of the verb ḥṭʾ is “purify, cleanse.” Exod 29:36 states that purification of the altar results from the ḥattāʾt sacrifice: “As for the ḥattāʾt bull, you shall sacrifice (על המזבח) this every day… so that you might purify the altar (המסיבה ויחטאת).” Lev 8:15 employs a nearly identical formulation: “Moses took the blood [of the ḥattāʾt bull] and put it around the horns of the altar with his finger, thereby purifying the altar (ויחטאת את המזבח).” A ḥattāʾt sacrifice is also required in the purification of women after childbirth (Lev 12), of people who have recovered from skin disease (Lev 14), and of people who have had genital discharge (Lev 15). I hesitate, however, to follow Milgrom in consistently rendering ḥattāʾt as “purification offering” because this does not capture the homonymy that ḥattāʾt shares with the Hebrew qal verb ḥāṭāʾ, “commit an offense” 67 and the Hebrew noun ḥattāʾā, “offense,” which ḥattāʾt sacrifices are also prescribed to remedy. Lev 4-5:13, which deals with ḥattāʾt sacrifices in greater detail and length than any other text, makes copious use of both of these words for “offense.” There are 16 instances of the verb ḥāṭāʾ “commit an offense” and 12 instances of the noun ḥattāʾā “offense” alongside 21 instances of the noun ḥattāʾt, without any instance of thepiel verb “purify.” This appears to me to reflect an association between the ḥattāʾt sacrifice and the notion of “offense.” It strikes me that Milgrom’s efforts to “[free] the ḥattāʾt from the theologically foreign notion of sin and [to restore] to it its pristine

67 As for the translation of ḥāṭāʾ and ḥattāʾā, I prefer “offense” to “sin” because in biblical Hebrew a ḥattāʾāḥ may be committed against a person in non-cultic settings (e.g., Gen 31:36; 50:17; 1 Sam 20:1), unlike the English word ‘sin,’ which is reserved for religious contexts.
meaning of purification” run counter to those of the Priestly authors of Lev 4-5:1-13.\(^6^8\)

These verses also differ from other presentations of ḥaṭṭāʾt regulations in classifying it as a kind of qorbān, “offering,” on four occasions (Lev 4:23, 28, 32; 5:11).\(^6^9\) The significant reciprocal valences of this term have been discussed above. Also relevant in this regard, Lev 4:31 states that the burning of the fat of the ḥaṭṭāʾt offering produces a “pleasing aroma for Yahweh” like non-expiatory offerings (Lev 1:9, 13; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16). Finally, the result of the offering of ḥaṭṭāʾt sacrifices is “forgiveness” (לחה והשלום; 4:20, 26, 31, 35, 5:10, 13). The Priestly regulations for ḥaṭṭāʾt sacrifices, then, portray them as instruments of both purification and reciprocal exchange.

Various texts in the Priestly and Holiness sources of the Pentateuch provide instructions for offering sacrifices in order that the sacrifices might be acceptable to or accepted by Yahweh. Instructions in the Holiness Source pertaining to the quality of the animal to be offered to Yahweh and the proper duration for the consumption of its meat are accompanied by purpose statements such as, “for your acceptance” (להเราจะ; Lev 19:5; 22:19, 29; 23:11) or result statements such as “it shall be accepted” (ירצה; Lev 22:27) or alternatively “it shall not be accepted” (לא ירה; Lev 19:7, 22:23, 25). The concern that sacrifices should be acceptable makes intuitive sense; the favorable social relations that gift exchange is meant to establish or improve are confirmed and actuated by a recipient’s participation in or approval of the transaction. A Priestly text adds a further reciprocal


\(^{6^9}\) In Num 15:25 a contrast is drawn between “their ḥaṭṭāʾ t [goat] (חטאתם)” and “their present [bull], an offering for Yahweh (קרבנה עצה להוה).”
When you offer a blind [animal] for sacrifice is it not evil? When you offer a lame or sick [animal] is it not evil? Offer it to your governor, will he accept you (יחשב), or be well disposed toward you (lit. “raise your face”)? ... Now entreat El that he may be gracious to us... Will he be well disposed toward you?

The upshot of this passage is that unacceptable offerings will be ineffective and even counterproductive (v.14) in pursuing favorable relations with either Yahweh or a powerful human recipient.

That acceptance is necessary in order for sacrifices to function effectively is expressed in the instructions for ascending offerings: “He shall lay his hand on the head of the ascending offering in order that it might be accepted for him, in order to effect wiping away [of offense or impurity] on his behalf” (Lev 1:4). Significantly, non-cultic gifts are also portrayed as having the capability to “wipe away” offenses committed against the receiving party if they are accepted, as the Jacob and Esau narrative illustrates. In Gen 32:21, Jacob states, “I shall wipe away (אכפרה) [the anger] from [Esau’s] face with the tribute (מנחה)… perhaps he will be well disposed toward me (lit. “raise my face”).” When Jacob meets Esau, he presses him (ишעך ובו; 33:11) to accept the gift, apparently to signal or actuate the improvement of relations that he desires. Esau does accept the gift and the two part ways on a favorable basis, the gift having done its work. The concept of wiping away an offense by means of a gift appears also in 2 Sam

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70 Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord*, 60. Levine points to Prov 16:14 as a precedent for this idiom: “The anger of a king is like messengers of death / But a wise man will wipe it away (יכפרנה).”

21:3, in which David asks the Gibeonites how he should make amends for Saul’s bloody acts of violence against them: “What shall I do for you? With what shall I wipe away (אכפר) [the offense] in order that you might bless the inheritance of Yahweh?” (2 Sam 21:3). The Gibeonites’ answer illustrates the principle that gifts are not capable of addressing all kinds of negative balances on the reciprocal scale, a notion that is prominent also in prophetic discourse: “It is not a matter of gold or silver between us and Saul or with his house” (v.4). Instead of gifts of silver and gold, the Gibeonites request seven of Saul’s sons for hanging. David delivers them and they are put to death (vv.6-9).

Above I have treated the reciprocal aspects of the Hebrew terminology and operative logic of sacrifice. In the following section I briefly argue that the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible continues and, in a few cases, expands upon the reciprocal valences of the Hebrew text. Several of the Septuagint's renderings of the generic Hebrew terms for sacrificial offerings employ gift terminology. Most significantly, the Septuagint renders each of the 80 instances of the Hebrew noun qorbān as dōron, the most basic Greek word for “gift.” This usage is noteworthy both for its absolute consistency and for the fact that a closer linguistic analogue to qorbān exists in Greek and is also used in cultic contexts, prosphora. Usage of Greek dōron to refer to sacrifices in a generic manner also occurs in the New Testament and Josephus, first century CE sources (Mt 5:23; 23:18; Ant 4.78. C. Ap. 1.167). In two instances in which the Hebrew term “gift” (מתנה) refers to sacrificial offerings, the Septuagint employs a slightly different gift term, doma (δόμα; Ex 28:38; Lev 23:38). Where the Hebrew term minḥāh refers to animal sacrifices in a generic manner, the Septuagint usually renders it

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72 Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, 18; Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, 145.
73 Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, 18. This term is employed in Sir 14:11.
as *thysia*, the most basic Greek term for sacrifice (e.g., 1 Sam 2:17, 29). A significant exception to this pattern occurs in Gen 4:3-5, where one of three occurrences of *minḥāh* is translated as *dōron*, "gift": "God appreciated Abel and his gifts (δώροις), but God did not appreciate Cain and his sacrifices (θυσίαις)...."74 In six of the instances in which the Hebrew Bible refers generically to sacrifices as *lehem*, "food," the Septuagint again employs the *dōron*, "gift" (Lev 21:6, 8, 17, 21, 22; 22:25). This translation practice suggests that the translators of the Septuagint found it more intelligible or otherwise preferable to represent sacrifices as gifts than as food.

The Septuagint employs a more limited range of verbs to describe the conveyance of sacrificial offerings, and, like the Hebrew verbs, many of these are also used to describe the conveyance of non-cultic gifts. The verb most commonly employed in cultic contexts is *prospherō*, which means, “bring to, present, offer.” This corresponds to the Hebrew verb *higriḥ*, for which it is the most common translation. This verb is used some 130 times in the Septuagint to describe the offering of sacrifices to God/the Lord. The same verb is used seven times to describe the offering of non-cultic gifts to human subjects. For example, “the kingdoms were bringing gifts (προσφέροντες δώρα) and serving Solomon all the days of his life” (1 Kgs 4:21/5:1); “Joseph entered the house and they [his brothers] brought (προσήνεγκαν) him the gifts (δώρα)....”75 The verb *pherō* without a prefix, which means ‘bring, carry,’ is also used to describe the conveyance of both sacrificial offerings and non-cultic gifts. An example of cultic usage occurs at Gen 4:3, “Cain brought (ἰνεγκε) a sacrifice (θυσίαν) to the Lord from the fruit of the earth, and Abel brought (ἰνεγκε) from the firstborn of his sheep.” Non-cultic usage occurs at 2

74 *Minḥāh* is also translated as *dōron* in 1 Kgs 8:64.
75 The other occurrences are: Gen 43:26, Judges 3:17, 18, Ps 72:10.
Kgs 17:3, “Hosea became a servant to him [Shalmaneser] and was bringing (ἐφεσεν) him gifts (δώρα).”

The verb προσάγω, “bring to, offer” likewise is used with both cultic and non-cultic gifts: “If you should offer (προσαγάγητε) a blind [animal] as a sacrifice (θυσία) is it not evil?” (Mal 1:8); “[the kings] of Sheba will bring (προσάξουσι) gifts (δώρα) [for Solomon]” (Ps 72:10).

The significant overlap between the terminology of non-cultic gift-giving and that of sacrifice, which obtains with respect to both verbs and nouns, suggests that performing sacrifice in ancient Judah and Israel was not merely like gift-giving, but rather a kind of gift-giving. The terminology examined above evidences a strong association between gifts and sacrifices that continues throughout the historical sweep of our evidence for Judean and Israelite sacrifice. Moreover, a variety of narrative and poetic biblical texts depicts sacrifice as a reciprocal activity whose cultic performance shares an undergirding logic with non-cultic practices of gift exchange. Baruch Levine’s observation thus seems apt: “The lexicon of the cult thus appears to be largely derivative, taking its terminology from other spheres in the life of a society, and attributing specialized meanings to terms and concepts of broader application.”

76 Other examples of non-cultic usage occur in 2 Kgs 17:4 and in Gen 33:11.
77 Other examples of cultic usage occur at Lev 1:3, Mal 1:7, 8, 2:12.
78 Levine, In the Presence of the Lord, 17.
CHAPTER THREE
Religious Reciprocity and the so-called “Prophetic Critique of Sacrifice”

In this chapter I argue that the biblical texts that modern scholars frequently portray as constituting a “prophetic critique of sacrifice” actually do not contain some generalized or categorical critique of sacrifice as a mode of religious practice. Stated briefly, my argument is that the biblical texts that portray Yahweh as rejecting, hating, or abhorring Israelite or Judean sacrifices should be interpreted in a straightforward, practical, and even technical manner. What Yahweh is rejecting in these historicizing narratives are the sacrificial gifts of the Judeans and Israelites in periods immediately before he visits harsh punishments upon them. In other words, Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices is embedded in the social logic of reciprocity and particular to specific historical episodes.¹ No prophetic text depicts Yahweh making durable theological pronouncements against the practice of sacrifice. To turn the matter on its head, I would suggest that the depiction of Yahweh accepting Israelite and Judean sacrifices immediately before their respective, spectacular defeats at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians—“foretold” in all of the prophetic

¹ After presenting an early version of this chapter at the 2012 SBL International Meeting in Amsterdam, I was introduced to Prof. Göran Eidevall of Uppsala University, who had arrived at conclusions similar to my own on the topic of sacrifice in prophetic rhetoric, but whose excellent book had not yet appeared in print. See now Göran Eidevall, Sacrificial Rhetoric in the Prophetic Literature of the Hebrew Bible (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012). Eidevall’s approach is largely in accord with my own: “If sacrifices are offered within the framework of a reciprocal human-divine relationship, the sacrificial system will always allow for the possibility that some sacrifices are rejected by the deity. Some of the so-called cult-critical passages are best explained as total but situational rejection of the cult… their main rhetorical function can be construed either as threat (because YHWH has cut off all cultic commun/icat/ion) or as retrospective explanation (YHWH is in control, the destruction of his temple/s/ was a punishment for the people's iniquities and this was announced in advance by his prophets)” [215-216].
texts that I treat—would have entailed that Yahweh is either capricious or weak, unwilling or unable to help Israel and Judah despite his acceptance of their gifts. In fact, the dominant historiographic strategy in prophetic texts is to explain Israelite and Judean military defeats as angry punishments from Yahweh. In support of this point, I will show that a number of biblical texts state or otherwise intimate that the acceptance of both sacrifices and non-cultic gifts is incommensurate with angry punishments or an enduring state of hostility, for it signals relatively favorable relations and a lack of ill will on the part of the receiving party.

The approach taken here stands in contrast to current scholarly approaches in three ways. First, many interpreters of prophetic texts treat sacrifice as a largely static “ritual [to be] performed” or as “worship” akin to a modern church liturgy or synagogue service. Hence, the depiction of Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices is interpreted as an indictment of ritual in general. As I argued in the previous chapter, our ancient evidence consistently treats sacrifice as an inherently transactional and relational process based on the social logic of gift-giving, an active and dynamic process that involves give and take—or, more specifically—offering and acceptance or rejection. In light of this latter point, I will argue that the depiction of Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices actually adheres to the practical logic of sacrifice and does not, as a matter of course, constitute some critique of ritual in general or sacrifice as a mode of worship.

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2 On this topic, see Nathaniel B. Levtow, Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008).
My approach also differs from several contemporary scholars who argue that prophetic texts depict Yahweh rejecting the practice of temple sacrifice because it constitutes an unfair economic burden imposed upon the poor by the “ruling classes.”

Scholars must read between the lines of the texts to arrive at this conclusion. Joseph Blenkinsopp takes up this position in his discussion of Amos in his *A History of Prophecy in Israel*:

[Amos’s] point seems to be that worship was (as it still is) a very powerful way of legitimating the current political and social status quo. Quite simply, Amos was not taken in by the religiosity of his contemporaries. A further and more specific point is that state cults were wealthy and complex operations, owning land, employing slaves, and supported by contributions, not all voluntary, from the population at large. Cultic personnel were, in addition, tax exempt, and the sacrificial system must have represented a significant drain on commodities and livestock; all of which will help to explain the frequent denunciations of priests and the sacrificial cult in the prophetic literature.

Blenkinsopp’s observations about the economic position of state cults are correct, but evidence is nevertheless lacking for the proposition that Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices in prophetic texts is a function of an underlying critique of exploitative socio-economic arrangements. Jonathan Klawans advances a similar argument in *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple*. Klawans interprets Mal 1:13, wherein Yahweh asserts that he will not accept a stolen offering, as encoding a general indictment of exploitative economic conditions that extends across the prophetic corpus:

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5 Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 93.

6 Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 80. This argument is echoed in Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 184, “[State cults] not only provided religious legitimation for an expansive and oppressive state apparatus but also imposed heavy economic burdens of their own. Temple personnel in the service of the state were tax exempt, economic support of the cult was not optional, and the sacrificial system represented a significant drain on livestock… animal sacrifice seems to have aroused the strongest negative reaction… no doubt because it could be so easily exploited to the advantage of temple personnel.”
The prophets’ “rejection” of sacrifice was deeply connected to their belief that Israel was economically rotten to the core…. One who has taken unjustly from the poor cannot properly give anything, and therefore the “sacrifice” offered by such a person is anathema.

[T]he prophets—or, at least, some of them—found sacrifice offensive because they believed that those who were offering gifts had themselves stolen them. The concern with property renders it impossible altogether to distinguish between a ritual violation and an ethical wrong. Sacrificing a stolen animal is, at one and the same time, both ethically and ritually wrong.

These arguments are coherent and perhaps appealing to some modern readers who are both concerned with social justice and uncomfortable with animal sacrifice; nevertheless, they lack direct textual support. No biblical text ever makes the argument that Yahweh opposes the practice of sacrifice because it is an exploitative and onerous burden on the poor. The book of Amos does criticize wealthy Israelites for their abuses against the poor and it also associates the wealthy with cultic practices (2:8). However, as I detail below, Amos has Yahweh rejecting Israelite sacrifices not simply by virtue of the fact that they are expensive, but because he is punishing them for specific ethical and cultic violations.

Indeed, all of the prophetic texts that portray Yahweh rejecting sacrifices clearly and explicitly depict him as being angry and preparing violent punishments for Israel and Judah, often in immediately adjacent passages. Participation in positive reciprocity is incompatible with negative reciprocity; one does not accept gifts from a person whom one is actively and angrily punishing, at least not in good faith. Although sacrifices are occasionally depicted as adding to Yahweh’s wrath—because he is vexed at receiving presents but not obedience—these are never depicted as being a root cause of Yahweh’s

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7 Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple*, 87. Klawans focuses on theft, but Mal 1 puts forth several reasons in explaining why Israelite sacrifices are unacceptable: “[You] offer polluted food on my altar… When you offer a blind [victim] for sacrifice is it not evil? Or a lame or a sick one, is it not evil?” (1:7-8).

8 Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple*, 98.
anger. Most prophetic texts trace Yahweh's anger to ethical abuses, “idolatry,” violations of the covenant, or some combination of these factors.

The final way in which my approach differs from many contemporary accounts is that I do not believe that prophetic literature speaks to some longstanding dispute between priests and prophets on the one hand and ethics and ritual on the other. Although Jonathan Klawans’ recent treatment of this issue is more cautious and nuanced than much previous scholarship, he, too, ultimately assents to this proposition: “In short, I believe that the disputes between priests and prophets were indeed real.”

Klawans continues: “The prophets hold the people to an ideal moral standard, while the priests seek to operate and maintain social institutions that serve these people’s needs.”

Ronald Hendel has recently offered a forceful defense of this position that warrants extended consideration. Hendel argues that prior to the “prophetic critique” of the eighth and seventh centuries, sacrifices and related rituals enjoyed the unquestioned status of doxa:

Prior to these prophetic critiques it was uncommon—or perhaps even unthinkable—to question the validity of customary Israelite rituals, including festivals, sacrifices, prayers, and hymns. These practices belonged to the domain of what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls doxa (Greek for “opinion, notion, expectation”). The doxa of a culture are the unquestioned assumptions and

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9 Klawans, Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple, 98.
10 Klawans, Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple, 100.
11 Ronald S. Hendel, “Away from Ritual: The Prophetic Critique,” in Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect (ed. Saul M. Olyan; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 59-80. See also: Ronald S. Hendel, “Prophets, Priests, and the Efficacy of Ritual,” in Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom (ed. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 185-198. “Whereas the priests see a correspondence and mutuality between ritual and ethics, the classical prophets contrast the ethical with the ritual... What is most remarkable in these is not the prophets’ denunciations of ritual per se, but their emphatic contrast between ritual and ethics. This contrast reflects a perspective utterly alien to that of the priests... we might say that the religious views of the prophets are not merely opposed, but are in a sense incommensurate. These priests and prophets are not talking to each other on the relationship between ritual and ethics, but are talking past each other” [190-191].
practices of everyday life, which since they are unspoken are not subject to argument or dispute.\footnote{Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 63.}

Before the appearance of Amos and other likeminded prophets, Hendel argues, it was customary for Israelites to assume that Yahweh “delights in” ritual activities, especially sacrifices.\footnote{Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 60.} As evidence for this position Hendel cites Gen 4:3-5, in which Cain and Abel offer sacrifices, “but no reason or justifications are given for this practice… As \textit{doxa}, sacrificial offerings in Genesis are simply part of ordinary practice, an unquestioned norm of the commonsense world, a self-evident proposition.”\footnote{Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 64.} The prophets, however, were “religious radicals and eccentrics”\footnote{Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 78, 72.} whose “social forms were… at variance with the social forms of the majority.”\footnote{Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 79.} By virtue of their eccentric and radical status, the prophets had the capability to “step outside the \textit{doxa} of their contemporaries and cast these conventional habits into radical doubt.”\footnote{Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 71.} From this outsider position, prophets such as Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah drew a binary distinction between ritual and ethics that was absolute and irreversible:

They seem to agree that the ritual practices of their contemporaries are worthless. Each makes a strong contrast between ritual and ethics, such that the \textit{doxa} of ritual is not only brought into question, but is rejected in contrast to the ethical virtues that Yhwh requires. This strong binary contrast between ritual and ethical practices is a striking feature of these prophetic texts.\footnote{Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 69.}
While Hendel notes that sacrifice is depicted as a reciprocal process,\textsuperscript{19} he does not consider that both acceptance and rejection are readily intelligible outcomes of this process. To my mind, the rejection of sacrifices does not imply a violation of unquestioned assumptions about the practice of sacrifice, as Hendel argues. As I detailed in the previous chapter, many biblical priestly texts explicitly consider the possibility that Yahweh might not accept a sacrifice (e.g., Lev 22:20, 23). In fact, the text that Hendel cites as evidence for the unquestionable status of sacrifice actually depicts Yahweh rejecting Cain’s sacrifice, and even employs terminology of rejection similar to Amos 5:22, the centerpiece of Hendel’s argument: “Yahweh looked [favorably] upon Abel and his tribute (מנחה), but as for Cain and his tribute Yahweh took no regard (שעה; Gen 4:4-5); “As for the sacrifice (שלם) of your fatted cattle, I will not look upon [it] (אביט; Amos 5:22).” Just as Yahweh might accept some sacrifices and reject others in Gen 4:3-5, it is conceivable that prophetic depictions of Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices at some historical moments do not preclude his acceptance of sacrifices at others. As I discuss below, texts within the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah—both of which Hendel cites as participating in the outright condemnation of ritual—depict future periods in which Yahweh will favorably accept sacrifices again.\textsuperscript{20}

As for the stark contrast that Hendel and Klawans draw between priests and prophets, it is my position that the so-called “prophetic critique of sacrifice” actually functions as an apology for the cult, despite the occasional depiction in prophetic

\textsuperscript{19} Hendel, “Away from Ritual,” 62, “By withholding his positive reception of these rites, he [Yahweh] nullifies their effectiveness. They become empty gestures, gifts with no recipient and no reciprocity.”

\textsuperscript{20} The irrevocability that Hendel picks up on in Amos 5:21-24 may reflect the historical fact that the kingdom of Israel was eradicated by Assyria in 721 B.C.E. Note that no such rejection appears in Amos’s oracle against the kingdom Judah (Amos 2:4-5), where a state sacrificial cult was also active.
literature of priests and prophets in conflict (e.g., Amos 7:10-17). In my reading, prophetic texts provide an explanation as to why Yahweh would allow his people to be defeated and his temples destroyed during periods in which sacrifice was regularly offered at state cults. This explanation does not challenge or undermine the basic reciprocal logic of sacrificial practice; rather, prophetic rhetoric iterates this logic. This observation helps to make sense of the fact that prophetic texts were ultimately collected and redacted by enfranchised Jerusalem priests or by those very close to them.21

Before my treatment of the biblical evidence, I will present a passage from Josephus that advances an expansive interpretation of a biblical text frequently associated with the “prophetic critique of sacrifice.” The biblical text is 1 Sam 15:21-22. In the first of these verses, Saul explains to Samuel that his people did not destroy the sheep and cattle of the Amalekites as he had been earlier instructed (v.3) in order that they might sacrifice them to Yahweh in Gilgal. In verse 22, Samuel provides the following rebuke: “Does Yahweh take as much delight in ascending offerings and slain offerings as he does in obedience to Yahweh? Obedience is better than a slain offering, compliance than the fat of rams.” Although this passage has been interpreted as a “denunciation of sacrificial practice,”22 it seems more accurate to describe it as a subordination of sacrifice to obedience, comparable to other Deuteronomic rhetoric concerning sacrifice (e.g., Deut 12).23 At any rate, Josephus did not find in this passage any denunciation of sacrificial practice. I quote Josephus’s expansive interpretation of the passage in full, as it provides a first century precedent for my approach:

21 Klawans, Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple, 97.
22 Klawans Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple, 79.
God does not take delight in sacrifices, but rather in the good and the just, those who follow his will and his commands, and who do not think something is done well other than that which is commanded by God. For he does not disparage when someone does not sacrifice to him, but when one thinks to disobey. But that which issues forth from those who do not obey is not the true and the only agreeable worship (θυσίαι) for God, and even if they sacrificed many fatted sacrifices (ἰερεῖα), or if they offered (προσφέρω) ornament, votive offerings made of silver and gold, he would not favorably accept (δέχεται) these; rather he would turn away (ἀποστρέφεται) and deem them instances of wickedness and not piety. He rejoices in those that have it in mind to do only that which God pronounces or commands and in those who choose to die rather than to transgress one of these [commandments]. He does not seek after a sacrifice from these ones, and from these ones who do sacrifice, even if it is simple, he accepts it (δεξιοῦται) as the honor of poverty with pleasure (ἡδιὸν) more than that from the most rich (AJ 6:147-149).

This passage neither assumes nor asserts any problem with sacrifice as a mode of religious practice. Sacrifices please God when they are offered by those who are obedient to God. It is only the sacrifices of the disobedient that God rejects. It is noteworthy that Josephus does not treat animal sacrifice as a singular matter; he includes votive offerings of silver and gold in the same conceptual category of gifts for God. Philo and other Greek philosophers take similar positions, which I will discuss in the following chapter. The portrayal of God’s participation in the sacrificial process is active and transactional; God either accepts or rejects that which has been offered to him. Finally, I note that the passage does not seem driven by any overt ideological or literary concerns; Josephus seems to be providing an interpretation in good faith of a text that has Yahweh subordinating sacrifice to obedience.

I begin my treatment of the biblical evidence with a brief summary of some salient points from the previous chapter that are relevant to the present discussion. I observed that in both Hebrew and Greek the generic terms for sacrifices are predominantly terms that mean, “gift,” “present,” or “tribute,” and that many of the verbs
that describe the action of offering sacrifices are also used to describe the offering of non-cultic gifts. I also observed the importance of notions of acceptance in prescriptive and narrative texts involving sacrifice and non-cultic gifts. Prophetic texts, too, highlight the centrality of acceptance in several portrayals of effective sacrificial practice. In Ezekiel’s Temple vision, Yahweh states that after a lengthy process of purification of the altar “the priests will make your ascending offerings and your sacrifices (שלםכם) and I will accept you (ראאתכם ממאתה)” (Ezek 43:27). Here, the usage of the personal object pronoun (“I will accept you”) mirrors the language from pentateuchal sacrificial regulations (e.g. Lev 1:3). Ezekiel 20:40-44 states that when the Israelites have been sufficiently punished for their misdeeds (v.44) and show remorse and regret (v.43), only then Yahweh will accept their sacrifices again:

On my holy mountain, on the mountain heights of Israel—says my lord Yahweh—all the house of Israel, all of it, shall serve me in the land. There I will accept them (ארsetParameter), and there I will seek your contributions and your tithes along with all your holy things: with a pleasing aroma (ניחח בריח) I will accept you (ארצה אתכם).

Adumbrating the argument below, this text draws a distinction between a period of punishment in which Yahweh will not accept sacrifices and a subsequent period in which hostility will have subsided and Yahweh will accept sacrifices again. A text from Trito-Isaiah similarly underscores the significance of acceptance in its depiction of appropriate sacrificial practice: “I will bring [foreigners] to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer, their ascending offerings and slain offerings will be acceptable (לרצון) on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people” (Isa 56:7). In this utopian vision of a restored Jerusalem Temple, Yahweh will accept not only
Israelite sacrifices, but also the sacrifices of non-Israelites (Isa 56:6). Another passage from Trito-Isaiah makes a similar claim about the renewed Temple: “Every flock of Kedar will be gathered for you; the rams of Nebioth will minister to you. They will ascend on my altar with acceptance (רצון על) and I shall glorify the house of my glory” (Isa 60:7). A later verse helps to explain this development, “For in my anger I attacked you, but in my favor (ברצון) I have compassion for you” (v.10). In this portrayal, when Yahweh relents from his fury he will favorably accept sacrifices from Israelites and even non-Israelites. Malachi, too, refers to a time when sacrifices will be pleasing to Yahweh yet again: “The tribute (מנחה) of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing (ערבה) to Yahweh, as in the days of yore, years long past” (3:4). Although prophetic texts are often viewed as being in opposition with priestly conceptions and priorities, the passages above adhere to the relational and reciprocal logic of sacrifice as they narrate ruptures and reconciliations in Yahweh’s relationship with Israel.

Numerous biblical texts state that when sacrifices and non-cultic gifts are accepted they have the capability to “wipe away” (כפר) certain offenses committed against the receiving party, whether Yahweh (e.g. Lev 4-5) or a human recipient. In the previous chapter I discussed Gen 32:21, in which Jacob states, “I will wipe away (כפרה)

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25 Also worthy of mention is a passage from Deutero-Isaiah, Isa 43:23-24, which seems to treat the interruption of sacrifices brought about by the destruction of the First Temple as part and parcel of a wider interruption of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel: “You have not brought me the small cattle of your ascending offerings, nor have you honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with [the offering] of tribute (מנחה), nor wearied you with frankincense. You have not purchased calamus [for incense] with money, nor have you satiated me with the fat of sacrifices. Rather, you have burdened me with your offenses and wearied me with your iniquities.”
[the anger] from [Esau’s] face with the tribute (מנחה).” I return to this narrative because it expresses a related notion that is illuminating for the present discussion, that the acceptance of gifts implies or actuates relatively favorable relations and a lack of ill will on the part of the receiving party. The relevant portion of the narrative has Esau in pursuit of Jacob, who is in fear of his life (32:8) and the lives of his family (32:12) due to his underhanded appropriation of his father’s blessing that properly belonged to Esau in an earlier episode (Gen 27). Esau, who has pledged to kill Jacob (27:41), is approaching with 400 men (32:7). Jacob instructs his servants to meet Esau and offer him “tribute” (מנחה; 32:14, 19), a common term also for sacrifices. Jacob’s stated goal in providing the tribute—to “wipe away” (כפר) his brother’s anger—provides another clear connection to the terminology of sacrifice, as the same verb is prominent in priestly texts, where that which is wiped away might be certain kinds of impurity or certain offenses committed against Yahweh. When the brothers meet, Jacob bows to Esau seven times, they embrace, and then Esau asks about the goods that he has encountered along the way, presumably a reference to the tribute-gifts presented by the servants (33:4-8). Jacob answers that it is intended “to find favor in the eyes of my lord” (33:8). At first Esau refuses the tribute, but Jacob presses the issue:

Jacob said, “No, if I have found favor in your eyes, then take my tribute from me for thus have I seen your face as though seeing the face of a god, and you accept me (תרצני).” Please take my gift (ברכתי) that has been brought for you, for Yahweh has been gracious to me and I have everything.” [Jacob] urged him and [Esau] accepted it (33:10-11).

In his request for Esau to take his gift, Jacob employs a specific term for acceptance (רצה) that is prominent in texts dealing with Yahweh’s acceptance of sacrifices. Jacob’s

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26 Interestingly as in Judges 13, discussed below, the danger of having looked upon a divine being is negated by that figure’s acceptance of the beholder.
strategy for placating his aggrieved and dangerous brother is focused on persuading him to accept the gift, illustrating the causal or signaling relationship between the acceptance of gifts and lack of hostile intent.

The notion that Yahweh’s acceptance of sacrifices similarly indicates a lack of hostile intent on his part finds explicit expression in Judges 13:23. Judges 13 narrates the divine announcement of Samson’s birth to his parents, Manoah and his unnamed wife. The announcement comes by way of two surreptitious angelic visits. After the second of these visits, Manoah entreats the angelic messenger to stay while he and his wife prepare a kid goat. The messenger refuses the invitation to dine, but tells Manoah, “If you make an ascending offering, make it for Yahweh” (v16). Manoah does just this:

Manoah took the kid and the tribute (מנחה) and he offered it up on the rock for Yahweh, creating a wonder as Manoah and his wife were looking on. When the flame ascended from the altar to the sky, Yahweh’s messenger ascended on the flame of the altar. Yahweh’s messenger was no longer visible to Manoah and his wife. Then he knew that it had been a messenger of Yahweh. Manoah said to his wife, “Surely we shall die for we have seen a god.” But his wife said to him, “If Yahweh had wanted to kill us, he would not have taken an ascending offering and tribute from our hands, nor would he have shown us all of these things, nor would he have announced this at this time.”

Manoah realizes that they have looked upon a divine being and fears for their lives. His wife, however, points out that Yahweh’s acceptance of sacrifice—confirmed here as in Judges 6:21-23 by the altar flame ascending into the sky—indicates that he does not want to kill the one offering the sacrifice. I repeat the crucial first part of her assertion: “If Yahweh had wanted to kill us, he would not have taken an ascending offering and tribute from our hands…” A further episode in the narrative signals that Manoah’s wife’s inference is correct: “The woman bore a son, and she named him Samson. The boy grew

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and Yahweh blessed him” (v.24). As with the Jacob and Esau narrative, Yahweh’s participation in sacrificial reciprocity explicitly signals a lack of hostile intent on the part of the receiver and relatively favorable relations between the parties involved.

Also relevant in explicating the logic and efficacy of sacrificial practice are the numerous statements that sacrifices produce a pleasing aroma (ריח נחוח) for Yahweh. There are 39 such statements, and they occur across the Priestly and Holiness sources of the Pentateuch and in Ezekiel.28 Many different kinds of sacrifices are said to produce a pleasing aroma: ascending offerings (Ex 29:18; Lev 1; Gen 8:21), priestly ordination offerings (Ex 29:25; Lev 8:28), perpetual ascending offerings (Ex 29:41; Num 28:6), tribute offerings (Lev 2), slain šelāmîm offerings (Lev 3), purification/offense sacrifices (Lev 4:31), vow and voluntary offerings (Num 15:3),29 libations (Num 15:7, 10), and first-fruits (Num 18:17). As for the phrase “pleasing aroma for Yahweh,” elements of the flood narrative in Gen 6-8 shed light on its meaning. In Gen 6:7 Yahweh sees that people have become wicked and makes the following resolution: “I shall wipe from the face of the earth the humans that I created, not only humans, but quadrupeds, crawling things and birds, for I am sorry that I made them (v.7).”30 After the flood has subsided, Yahweh rescinds his deadly resolution, but only after he has smelled the pleasing aroma of Noah’s sacrifices:

Noah built an altar to Yahweh, and he took of every kind of clean cattle, and of every kind of clean bird, and he offered up ascending offerings to Yahweh on the

28 Gen 8:21; Ex 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 6:8, 14; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18; Num 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24; 18:17; 28:6, 8, 13, 24, 27; 29:2, 6, 8, 13, 36; Ezek 6:13; 16:19; 20:41.
29 In P these are treated as subtypes of the šelāmîm offering; in H it appears that these may be of the ascending variety as well (Num 15:3).
30 In P’s version Yahweh makes a similar resolution: “The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; I am about to destroy them along with the earth” (v.13).
altar. Yahweh smelled the pleasing aroma (نزחה רוח אלוהים ורוח) and Yahweh said to himself, “Never again will I curse the earth on account of humankind… and never again will I strike down every living thing as I have done” (Gen 8:20-21).

This text suggests a causal relationship between the pleasing aroma of the smoke of offerings and Yahweh’s resolution to no longer wreak destruction on the earth; in other words, the aroma of the sacrifices effects Yahweh’s placation. With respect to acceptance, it is noteworthy that Noah had “found favor in the eyes of Yahweh” at an earlier point in the J narrative (Gen 6:8), a phrase also employed in the Jacob and Esau narrative (33:8). I would suggest that this phrase indicates favorable relations and satisfies the social preconditions for the acceptance of sacrifices. Ezek 20:40-41, discussed above, associates Yahweh’s reconciliation with the Israelites with the pleasing aroma of acceptable sacrifices. Also relevant in this regard is 1 Sam 26:19, wherein David suggests that Yahweh should “smell tribute” (מנחה ירח) if Yahweh has stirred Saul against him, suggesting that tribute has a soothing effect.

With these wider observations about the biblical terminology and reciprocal logic of sacrifice in mind, I turn to the prophetic evidence. I shall treat each of the major texts that are commonly associated with the “prophetic critique of sacrifice”: Amos 5:21-27, Isa 1:11-15, Jer 6:20, Hos 6:6 and 8:13, and Micah 6:6-8. Because my focus rests ultimately on the reception of these texts, I shall pay close attention to the precise rhetorical contours and technical terminology of the passages rather than to issues pertaining to their dating and authorship. I will endeavor to point out three features of each of these texts: First, no text clearly articulates some thoroughgoing critique of sacrifice as a mode of religious practice; rather, the texts state variously—sometimes scathingly—that sacrifices are ineffective in averting Yahweh's coming punishments, and
that Yahweh refuses to accept sacrifices because he is angry. Second, I will show that the passages in which Yahweh rejects sacrifices are embedded in larger rhetorical units in which Yahweh spells out the reasons that he is angry with Israel, which are usually ethical abuses, cultic transgressions (other than the mere act of offering sacrifices), or violations of the covenant. Third, I will point out that surrounding verses in each of the texts specify that Yahweh is beyond placation and absolutely resolute in his judgment to execute punishments against Israel or Judah, which invariably involves military defeat, subjugation to foreign peoples, and exile, situations that are not commensurate with the favorable acceptance of gifts.

Perhaps the text most frequently associated with the prophetic critique of sacrifice is Amos 5:21-27. This text displays all of the characteristics of prophetic rhetoric about sacrifice discussed above. The verses immediately preceding the passage portray a scenario of imminent doom in which Yahweh has resolved to visit punishment upon Israel:

My lord Yahweh, god of armies, has spoken thus: there will be mourning in all the streets, and they will say, “Oh, no!” in public places. They will call the farmer to mourning and the wailers to wail. There will be mourning in all the vineyards, for I will pass through your midst, said Yahweh. Pity the ones that desire the day of Yahweh, for the day of Yahweh is darkness, not light. It is as if a man fled from a lion and ran into a bear and he got home and leaned his arm on the wall and a snake bit him. Is not the day of Yahweh darkness and not light, gloom without brightness? (5:16-20)

Much of the earlier content in the chapter—indeed, much of the content of Amos from 2:6 onward—serves to explain Yahweh’s rationale for punishing Israel on this “day of Yahweh.” The indictment involves offenses of a primarily ethical nature:

They hate the one who adjudicates in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks with integrity… you trample the poor, and impose a levy of grain from him… I know your transgressions are many and your offenses are great. Afflicting the
innocent and taking bribes, they cast aside the poor in the gate [a place of judgment] (5:9-12).

The depiction of Yahweh’s rejection of Israelite sacrifices in the following passage is commensurate with his anger and resolution to punish Israel:

I hate, I reject (לא אראח) your pilgrimage festivals; I will not smell (אריח לא) your assembly feasts (חגיכם) If you offer up to me your ascending offerings (עלה) and your tribute (מנחתיכם) I will not accept [them] (アニ ארצה). I will not look upon the sacrifice (שלם) of your fatted cattle. Remove the noise of your songs from my presence; I will not listen to the music of your instruments. But let justice (משפט) roll down like water; righteousness (צדקה) like an ever-flowing torrent.31 Did you offer me sacrifices (זבחים) and tribute (מנחה) in the wilderness for forty years, O House of Israel? You shall carry your images of Sakkut your king and Kewan,32 your gods, and I shall drive you into exile beyond Damascus—says Yahweh, the God of armies is his name (5:21-27).

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31 Another possible rendering: But let judgment (משפט) roll down like water; vindication (צדקה) like an ever-flowing torrent.
32 Omitting “star.”
In the first part of the passage, Yahweh asserts that he hates and rejects Israelite pilgrimage festivals and will not “smell” Israelite feasts, referring to the smoke of the sacrifices performed on these occasions. Whereas this verse is often thought to express Yahweh’s outright disdain for sacrifice, the specific object of Yahweh’s hatred is pilgrimage festivals, ḫaggīm. The verb “smell” is the same as that employed in Gen 8:21 and 1 Sam 26:19, texts involving the placation of Yahweh through sacrifice. The verb also shares the same root as the noun “aroma” in the common phrase “pleasing aroma for Yahweh.” In my reading, Yahweh’s assertion that he will not smell the festal sacrifices is an assertion of his implacability rather than a criticism of sacrifice or ritual in general. Next, Yahweh avers that he will not accept Israelite ascending offerings, nor will he “look upon”—another idiom for acceptance—their “sacrifice of fatted cattle.” The verb “accept” (ארצה) is the same one used in priestly expositions of sacrificial regulations. It bears reiterating that priestly texts never claim that Yahweh always accepts sacrifice or that sacrifice functions in an automatic manner; in allowing for the possibility of acceptance they allow for the possibility of rejection. In this passage, Yahweh refuses to accept sacrifices because he is incensed. In line with his rejection of Israelite feasts and festivals, Yahweh asserts his displeasure with Israelite songs and music, likely cultic, an aspect of the text that is frequently overlooked in briefer treatments. There are two ways to interpret verse 24, which is often read as contrasting the unnecessary, unwanted, and useless cultic activities mentioned earlier (sacrifices, feasts, music) with the provision of justice and righteousness in the land, both of which are sorely lacking in Israel according to the earlier material in Amos. Another reading of this verse sees it as referring to the coming punishment of the Israelites. The nouns justice/judgment (משפט) and
righteousness/vindication (צדק) are both common in forensic contexts and may refer to Yahweh’s coming punishments, which will roll down like mighty waters or like a torrential wadi flashflood. However one reads this passage, there is indeed a subordination of cultic activities. In the first reading, cultic activities are subordinated to the more necessary provision of justice; in the second, they are unable to forestall the imminent punishments. But such subordination does not challenge the reciprocal logic of sacrifice as presented in priestly texts, which never state that Yahweh is more pleased with cultic activities than he is with the provision of justice, nor that sacrifices are effective in remedying any offense no matter how severe. To the contrary, priestly texts clearly state that expiatory sacrifices are only effective in remedying certain unintentional violations of cultic regulations or sacra (Lev 4-5, Num 15), not the kind of gross ethical abuses described in Amos. The verses that follow are sometimes interpreted as a later, Deuteronomistic insertion.\(^\text{33}\) Verse 25 implies that sacrifices were not offered in the post-Exodus desert wanderings of the Israelites, contradicting the pentateuchal account. Wolff argues that the upshot of this verse is not that sacrifices are problematic, but rather that “the time in the wilderness was the time of absolute faithfulness,” when gifts were unnecessary to mediate the relationship between Yahweh and Israel.\(^\text{34}\) Verse 26 ironically ties the offense of worshipping gods other than Yahweh to the punishment for this and

\(^\text{33}\) Hans W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos* (Hermeneia 29-30; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 264-265, argues that the pairing, “sacrifices and tribute” (ומנחה זבחים) is a late formulation and that “tribute” (מנחה) in the eighth century referred to sacrifices in general rather than to grain based accompaniments. He also argues that the only other assertion that the Israelites did not sacrifice in the desert occurs in a Deuteronomistic insertion to Jeremiah (7:21-23).

\(^\text{34}\) Wolff, *Amos*, 265.
other offenses: the Israelites will carry the standards of the gods Kewan and Sakkut into captivity beyond Damascus.  

Whereas many scholars have cited or briefly quoted Amos 5:21-23 in claiming that there is a durable and generic renunciation of animal sacrifice or cult ritual in the prophetic literature, two comprehensive commentaries on Amos arrive at a different conclusion, namely that the condemnations are historically specific and target the offerers rather than the offerings. Hans Walter Wolff suggests that the passage was “probably proclaimed at the state sanctuary at Bethel… Speaking as the messenger of Yahweh, Amos proclaims to his audience the sweeping rejection of all their cult offerings.” Quoting Gerhard von Rad, Wolff summarizes Amos 5:21-27 as an “announcement of punishment upon those who despise God’s commands and at the same time deceive themselves by presuming to maintain through the cultus a stable relationship with God.”

The problem lies with the offenses committed by those who are offering sacrifices, not the offering of sacrifices in itself. David Noel Freedman and Francis I. Andersen arrive at a similar conclusion in their comment to Amos 5:21-27:

The prophets have too often been portrayed as modern freethinking rationalist monotheists who rejected the cult entirely on the grounds that it was a vestige of primitive conceptions of deity and worship. There is little doubt that they believed that obedience was better than sacrifice and that doing justice and righteousness was more important than practicing the liturgy. Still, it is difficult to imagine, especially in that setting, that they wished to do away with public worship at the temple or the great festivals, with their multiform sacrifices and other rites.

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36 Wolff *Amos*, 262-263.
37 Wolff *Amos*, 266.
38 Wolff *Amos*, 267, “Amos has not merely issued a cultic decision of limited applicability [i.e., Yahweh will always reject the sacrifices of the wicked]. On the other hand, neither has he presented fundamental deliberations on the cultus as such.”
Neither Wolff nor Anderson and Freedman explicate the reciprocal dimension of prophetic portrayals of rejected sacrifice or extend their reading across the prophetic corpus; nevertheless, they recognize that Amos 5:21-27 is historically specific and directed at people, not practices.

Another text frequently associated with the “prophetic critique of sacrifice” is Isaiah 1:11-15. As with the passage from Amos above, the verses preceding this passage depict a scenario in which Israel is guilty of serious offenses and deserving of severe punishment. The oracle begins with Yahweh calling on the heavens and the earth to witness the guilt of Israel, invoking again a forensic context of judgment: “Listen, Heavens; take note, Earth, for Yahweh has spoken: ‘I have raised children; I have brought them up, but they have rebelled against me’” (v.2). Unlike oxen who recognize their masters, Israel does not recognize its master, Yahweh (v.3). Israel’s condemnation continues: “Oh offending nation, a people burdened with iniquity, seed of evil-doers, children of corruptors, they have abandoned Yahweh. They despise the holy one of Israel; they have turned backward” (v.4). The following verses employ a bodily metaphor to assert the deservedness of Israel’s punishment as well as Israel’s ill health due to previous punishments: “Where shall you be struck again?—you continue to stray. Your head is injured and your heart is faint. From the sole of the foot to the head, nothing is and its temple [sic] as God’s final judgment and his punishment for persistent apostasy. The end of the cult was proclaimed as a judgment visited by a justly angry God on his people, not as a goal to be devoutly wished and sought” [540]. In their comment to Amos 4:4, Andersen and Freedman write: “Some commentators have read this and similar critiques throughout the prophets as an indictment of the cultus as such, but that judgment is too categorical. The attitude of the prophets to the political and religious institutions and officials of Israel was ambivalent. They could commend or condemn as occasion required. This passage is not a general rejection of all the festivals; it is a specific pronouncement against a particular festivity, a national celebration” [434].
sound: welts and gashes, injuries and wounds” (1:5-6). The following verse moves from the metaphor to its referent, Israel’s military defeat: “Your country is desolate; your cities have been burned by fire. As for your land, strangers devour it in front of you; it is desolate, as though overturned by strangers” (v.7). A later verse in the chapter reasserts the principle of rebellion and punishment: “If you refuse and rebel you shall be destroyed by the sword” (v.20). Referring to the Assyrian campaign against Israel and Judah, verses 8 and 9 describe Jerusalem as a booth in a vineyard (v.8), “a small remnant” of a once great kingdom, preserved by Yahweh though it should have perished like Sodom and Gomorrah (v.9). In fact, the passage in which Yahweh states that he will not accept sacrifices is directed explicitly at the leaders of Sodom and Gomorrah, that is, the rulers of Israelite and Judean territories that have already been ravaged by an invading army:

Listen to the word of Yahweh, O leaders of Sodom; pay heed to the instruction of our God, people of Gomorrah. For what purpose is this multitude of your slain offerings? says Yahweh. Am I satisfied with ascending offerings of rams and fat of fatted cattle? I have no desire for the blood of bulls, or lambs or goats. When you come to be seen before me, who requested this from you, trampling my courts? Bring no more false tribute (שוא מנחה; it is abominable incense to me. New moon and Sabbath and the proclaiming of assemblies—I cannot bear iniquity and assembly feast. My very person hates your new moons and your appointed feasts; they are a burden upon me that I am weary of carrying. When you spread out your hands [in supplication] I will hide my eyes from you; also, when you multiply prayers I will not listen; your hands are full of blood (1:10-15).

The passage begins with an assertion that the sacrifices of the “leaders of Sodom” and “people of Gomorrah” have no purpose; they do not satisfy Yahweh and are useless in averting his punishments. Yahweh dislikes even the mere presence of such offensive people in his sanctuary courts. He has no desire for false or worthless tribute; that is, tribute which does not truly express homage and submission to its receiver. The next statement is of particular significance in unpacking the meaning of the entire passage.
Yahweh cannot bear festivals that have the taint of iniquity. In other words, it is not the religious rites that are unbearable for Yahweh, but rather the fact that the people performing them are offensive and culpable. Furthermore, Yahweh refuses to consider the prayers and supplications of people whose “hands are full of blood.” If this passage encodes a generic critique of the practice of sacrifice, as is often claimed, it is unclear to me how it does not also encode a critique of practices of supplication and prayer, an implication that is rarely considered. In my reading, Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices, festivals, and prayers in this text is inextricably tied to Yahweh’s angry punishment of a rebellious and offensive nation.

Jeremiah 6:20 is also commonly thought to express generic criticism of sacrifice. As with the passages above, I will consider the rhetoric of the surrounding verses and especially of the oracle in which the passage is embedded before treatment of the verse itself. Early verses in chapter 6 depict a scenario in which Yahweh is angrily punishing the Judeans for their misdeeds. Verse 6 anticipates the punishment of military defeat for Jerusalem: “Cut down [Jerusalem’s] trees and build siege ramps against Jerusalem. This is the city to be punished, it is oppression from inside out.” Verse 11 describes Yahweh’s anger: “I [Yahweh] am full of the fury of Yahweh; I am weary of containing it.” Verse 15 again spells out the coming punishments: “They shall be put to shame because they have committed abomination. They neither feel shame nor know how to be humiliated. Therefore they shall fall among the fallen; they will be brought low at the time I punish

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40 Belenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 184, interprets “prayer” as “liturgical prayer” in order to maintain his argument that what is opposed in this passage is oppressive temple personnel. My own reading is that Yahweh is committed to punishing Israel and hence will not heed supplication or prayer, whether “liturgical” or not.
them.” The specific oracle in which 6:20 is embedded (6:16-21) continues the theme of disobedience and punishment:

Thus said Yahweh: stand in the streets and look around, ask for the old paths—Which one is the good way?—and walk in it so that you might find rest. But they said, “We will not walk.” I set watchmen over you—Listen for the sound of the horn!—But they said, “We will not listen.” Therefore let the nations hear and let the council know what is in store for them. Let the Earth hear this [as witness]: I am bringing evil upon this people, the fruit of their contrivances, for they have not listened to my words and they have rejected my instruction. For what purpose does this frankincense come to me, and calamus [incense] from a distant land? Your ascending offerings are not acceptable (לרצון לא), your slain offerings are not pleasing (Λא זרעים) to me. Therefore Yahweh has spoken thus: I am furnishing stumbling blocks for this people, fathers and sons together will stumble against them, a resident and his neighbor, and they shall perish.

The context is one of judgment and punishment. The first verses describe the disobedience of the Judeans. The nations, the “council,” perhaps the heavenly council, and the Earth are called upon as witnesses for the lawsuit and its verdict. Verse 20 states that sacrifices are of no use in averting or suspending Yahweh’s judgment. As with Amos 5:22, the terms in which Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifice is expressed are familiar from cultic settings. The word “acceptable” (רצה) is common in priestly texts. The phrase, “pleasing to me,” employs a word that is used in a positive cultic context in Mal 3:4, quoted earlier. This passage, like the one from Amos, employs notions of acceptance and rejection that do not conflict with priestly understandings of how sacrifice functions.

Verse 21 concludes the oracle clearly and ominously: “they shall perish.” In my view it would have been inconceivable to depict Yahweh accepting sacrifice in this context of disobedience, judgment, and destruction. As one commentator has put it, “Yahweh is not averse to Temple worship per se. The reason it no longer delights him is that people have
rejected his word.”41 It is worthy of note that a later passage in what is often considered to be the same authorship strand of Jeremiah looks to the future resumption of sacrifice in an era of obedience to Yahweh: “If you obey me…. this city will be inhabited forever, and they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the surroundings of Jerusalem… bringing ascending offerings and slain offerings, and tribute and frankincense, and bringing thank offerings to the Temple of Yahweh” (Jer 17:24-26). This resumption of sacrifice makes sense in a scenario in which the period of punishment has ended and relations between Yahweh and Judah have normalized.

I now turn to two frequently cited passages from Hosea. The first states: “I desire loyalty, not a slain offering, knowledge of God more than ascending offerings” (6:6). This passage expresses a similar notion to that expressed in 1 Sam 15:22, loyalty and obedience to Yahweh are preferable to the offering of sacrifice. This rhetoric subordinates sacrifice to loyalty but does not constitute a categorical criticism of sacrificial practice. The following verses portray a situation in which the Israelites have aggrieved Yahweh: “But they, like humankind, have violated the covenant; … they have betrayed me” (v.7). There follow other indictments: the priests are murderers (6:9, not of sacrificial animals); Israel has been defiled by fornication (6:10); they have committed acts of wickedness and falsehood (7:1-3); they are adulterers (7:4). The punishments that Yahweh has in store for Israel are violent and imminent, just as in the other prophetic texts treated above: “I will spread my net upon them; I will take them down like a [predatory] bird; I will admonish them in accordance with the proclamation to their

41 Lundbom, Jeremiah 1-20, 438. “Do temple sacrifices not require [frankincense and good cane]? Does not Yahweh savor their swell smells? Yahweh says these no longer please him. Why? We are not told. But when this oracle is taken together with the previous oracle the answer becomes clear. People have not heeded his words and have rejected his teaching” [440].
assembly. Pity them, for they have strayed from me; theirs is destruction for they have rebelled against me” (7:12-13). This context of rage and impending punishment sets the scene for the second passage (8:13):

As for the sacrifices that are my gifts (הבהבי זבחי), let them sacrifice the flesh and eat it [themselves]. Yahweh does not accept them (רצם לא). Now he will remember their misdeed and punish their offenses. They shall return to Egypt.

The argument here is that people might as well eat the flesh of their sacrifices rather than offering it to Yahweh, for Yahweh will not accept it and it would be wasted on him. This implies that at other times sacrificial meat is put to good use as a gift for Yahweh.

Consideration of the immediate context of this verse makes it clear that sacrificing is ineffective not because Yahweh rejects it as a mode of worship but because he is angrily punishing the Israelites, in this case with exile to Egypt.

Micah 6:6-8 similarly expresses the subordination of sacrifice to loyalty. The previous verses of the chapter set up a judicial context in which Yahweh states first that he is innocent of any misdeed against Israel (6:3); indeed, Yahweh has redeemed Israel from the house of bondage in Egypt (6:4), implying that Israel owes a debt of gratitude to Yahweh. The verses following 6:6-8 contain a now-familiar litany of allegations of wickedness (6:10), violence and deceit (6:12), as well as the promise of punishment: “I will inflict a devastating attack upon you on account of your offenses” (6:13). More specific accusations and a restatement of the threat of punishment appear in verse 16: “Omri’s statutes are observed, as well as all the acts of the house Ahab, and you walk in their counsel. Therefore, I will ruin you and make you an object of derision, and you will bear the disgrace of my people.” The subordination of sacrifice makes sense in this forensic context of accusation and punishment:
With what shall I come before Yahweh and bow myself to the God of heights; shall I come before him with ascending offerings, with calves a year old? Will Yahweh accept (הירצה) thousands of rams, a multitude of rivers of oil? Shall I give him my firstborn for my rebellion, the fruit of my body for my offense? He has told you, human, what is good, and what Yahweh seeks from you: to do justly, and to love loyalty, and to walk humbly with your God (6:6-8).

The sacrifices mentioned are hyperbolic and express the idea that no matter the quality or quantity of the sacrifices, they cannot address the ingratitude and betrayal that Yahweh has suffered from his people. There is no ground for abstracting from the passage a general critique of sacrifice as a mode of religious practice; the context, again, is one of judgment in which sacrifices cannot address the enormity of Israel’s crimes.

To conclude: I have argued above that the texts that are commonly thought to express some generalized “prophetic critique of sacrifice” do no such thing, nor do they provide evidence that speaks to some longstanding dispute or opposition between priests and prophets. All of the texts frequently associated with the “prophetic critique” have Yahweh furiously and pitilessly punishing the Israelites or Judeans with brutal military defeat and other calamities, contexts that I have argued are incommensurate with him having accepted sacrifices from them prior to these events. Regardless of whether these texts were composed before or after the respective defeats of Israel and Judah by the Assyrians and Babylonians, prophetic discourse of this kind functions as an apology for cults of Yahweh. It explains how Israel and Judah could suffer devastating military defeats, which took place during periods when sacrifice was actively offered, without challenging well-attested assumptions about sacrificial practice. This in turn helps to explain why prophetic texts were embraced by later authorities who might well have had strong connections to the Jerusalem Temple cult. No prophetic text asserts that Yahweh has rejected sacrifice as a mode of religiosity; these texts only make the points that
Yahweh prefers obedience to sacrifices and does not accept sacrifices from guilty people whom he is actively and angrily punishing. These latter assertions have close parallels in the writings of Philo of Alexandria and other Greek philosophers, the topic of the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
Sacrifice and Reciprocity in Philo of Alexandria

In this chapter I argue that the writings of Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.E.-50 C.E.) consistently treat the offering of sacrifices as a transactional practice by means of which humans endeavor to engage in reciprocal exchanges with God, whether to make a request of him or to express gratitude for the receipt of some divine favor. As to the effectiveness of sacrifice as an instrument of human-divine exchange, Philo’s statements on the issue are ambivalent, and this ambivalence has a clear basis in two central components of his philosophical thought. On the one hand, Philo’s religious outlook may be characterized as being primarily noetic, assigning a fundamental role to the mind or intellect. Philo portrays God as a mental being whom humans should approach by way of intellectual expressions, virtuous dispositions, and mental ascents rather than with base material offerings. In this regard it is unsurprising that he occasionally makes statements that criticize or subordinate not only animal sacrifices but also other kinds of material offerings in favor of mental demonstrations of gratitude or praise.¹ On the other hand, Philo’s writings clearly attest his commitments both to the Judean religion of his day—including the sacrificial cult of the Jerusalem temple—and to the literal “level” of the text of Pentateuch, in which sacrifice has a prominent and unproblematic role.² In this latter

¹ Philo shares this position with other Greek philosophers, particularly Theophrastus. See Jon D. Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 66. I quote relevant sections from Theophrastus and other Greek philosophers below.
regard it is equally unsurprising that Philo occasionally makes positive statements about sacrificial practice, albeit statements that frequently call attention to what he views as the proper noetic aspects of such practice. Taking into account both of these commitments, it has been argued that for Philo the “rite” of offering sacrifices ideally functions an external, material counterpart to the genuine, “spiritual” worship of a pure mind or soul. ³ I formulate this matter somewhat differently: Philo assents to the practice of sacrifice, but he frequently emphasizes that in offering sacrifices or other material gifts to God it is only the thought that counts, because God has no real need or desire for anything.⁴ Moreover, sacrifices and other gifts that people offer with the expectation that they might please, flatter, or bribe God—causing him to overlook some offense on the part of the offerer—are not only ineffective but dangerously counterproductive; rather than mitigating the original offense, they exacerbate it through insult.⁵ Philo’s philosophical statements on sacrifice are of relevance for the wider arguments of this work because in these statements Philo maintains a consistent conceptual association between sacrifice and reciprocity, whatever his misgivings about the efficacy or rationality of sacrifice in

³ Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (TSAJ 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 253, “Philo’s idea of the sacrifices is consistent. The external performance of the rites is insufficient: the purity of the mind must accompany every sacrifice, and the ultimate motive of every sacrifice must be thanksgiving to God the benefactor… for Philo the spiritual and actual service are closely connected, because man is a composite being, and the spiritual aspect of the worship is related to the soul while the actual worship is linked to the body.” “[M]aterial rites… are linked with the moral and spiritual approach to God. The balance between body and mind is maintained, although Philo’s personal preferences lie with the spiritual worship” [255]. See also Valentin Nikiprowetzky, “La Spiritualisation des Sacrifices et le Culte Sacrificial au Temple de Jérusalem chez Philon d’Alexandrie,” *Semitica* 17 (1967), 114-116 [97-116].


⁵ This argument also has analogues in Greek philosophy. Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*, 67: “The philosophic criticisms of sacrifice we have considered… concern the use of them to persuade the gods to overlook injustices, the atmosphere in which the sacrifice is made (*euphemia*), expensive versus inexpensive offerings, and the moral status of the offerer.”
this regard. For Philo, as for the other ancient Judean and Israelite sources treated in previous chapters, sacrifices are always gifts; the subject of Philo’s discussions and deliberations on the topic of sacrifice is how—or indeed whether—material gifts are of any benefit in people’s ongoing relations with God.

Philo’s statements on sacrifice emerge from long-ranging discussions of various topics that are scattered across many of his works. While these statements possess a substantial degree of logical coherence, they do not amount to a programmatic or systematic theology or doctrine of sacrifice, and, as with his treatments of other matters, his positions are occasionally contradictory. In my estimation, Philo advances four interrelated yet discrete positions on sacrifice, all of which are in general accord with other Greek philosophical discourse on sacrifice. First, Philo criticizes animal sacrifices and other material offerings, subordinating them to noetic expressions and ethical dispositions. Second, Philo criticizes “mistaken” assumptions about sacrifice, which intimate that people believe sacrifices to function in the same way as gifts intended for human recipients. Third, Philo prescribes mental preparations and ethical dispositions that enable people to conduct acceptable sacrificial practice. Fourth, Philo occasionally presents sacrifice as an efficacious religious undertaking without making any critical, cautionary, or prescriptive comments. These latter statements, which are often auxiliary to discussions of other matters, are of relevance because they suggest that Philo’s default position with respect to sacrifice is relatively positive. In elaborating each of these positions below I will emphasize the consistency with which Philo treats sacrifice as one part of a wider class of gifts for God.

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Although Philo is best known for his philosophical writings, he also provides a point of entry to the historical focus of the present study. Philo was a direct contemporary of the Herodian Jerusalem Temple and claims to have visited the Temple to participate in its cult. This claim emerges from a lengthy dialogue concerning the behavior of birds: “There is a city in Syria on the coast called Ascalon. When I was there, at a time when I was going to the ancestral temple to offer prayers and sacrifice (εὐξόμενος τε καὶ θύσων), I saw an inconceivable number of pigeons…”7 The context of this passage suggests that the claim is not serving some ideological motive; what is at stake for Philo here is the behavior of birds, not his own religiosity.8

My approach differs from previous scholarly treatments in four ways. First, mirroring much biblical scholarship on sacrifice, most scholarship on Philo has overlooked the transactional dimension of his statements about sacrifice, treating the practice instead as static worship or as a ritual to be performed.9 Jutta Leonhardt’s Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria exemplifies this approach. In her introduction, Leonhardt classifies sacrifice as one kind of “worship,” which she defines as “the formal expression of religious adoration; rites, prayers, etc.”10 Throughout a lengthy chapter devoted to the topic of sacrifice, she treats the practice of sacrifice as “formal” (as opposed to

7 On Providence, 2.64. I have employed the Greek texts of the Loeb Classical Library.
10 I am confused by Leonhardt’s definition here. Although she criticizes other scholars for their “modern [and] external” definitions of worship, hers, which she deems “appropriate” for her study, is that of the 1750 edition of the Collins Dictionary of the English Language. Leonhardt, Jewish Worship, 7-8. The subsequent discussion of the Greek term latreia presumes and does not contribute to an analytic definition of “worship” (10-17).
“spiritual”)11 “rituals and rites”12 that might be “valid”13 or “invalid.”14 While Leonhardt’s presentation includes occasional references to reciprocal conceptions (e.g.,“thanksgiving”),15 she does not directly address the issue of reciprocity even in passages where the Greek terminology of gift-giving is prominent and explicit, or where Philo directly criticizes mistaken reciprocal expectations pertaining to sacrifice. For example, on the basis of a passage in which Philo criticizes the offering of sacrifices as “giving gifts (δῶρα... διδούς) to one not subject to bribes (ἀδεξιώτω), who will never take (ληψομέν) such things,”16 Leonhardt concludes, “Philo rejects the idea of the merit of mere performance of ritual. The inner soul must be involved in any worship activity in order to make the worship genuine.”17 Leonhardt’s analysis thus disregards the gift-giving terminology that is conceptually and linguistically integral to the passage.

Second, I do not endeavor to catalogue Philo’s allegorical interpretations of Pentateuchal representations of things and people associated with sacrificial practice,18 a task that has already been accomplished in numerous publications, such as Robert Hayward’s The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook.19 Although Hayward’s stated

11 Leonhardt, Jewish Worship in Philo, 239. Protestant bias seems evident in this choice of terminology.
12 Leonhardt, Jewish Worship in Philo, 222.
13 Leonhardt, Jewish Worship in Philo, 222.
14 Leonhardt, Jewish Worship in Philo, 237.
15 “The external performance of the rite is insufficient: the purity of the mind must accompany every sacrifice, and the ultimate motive of every sacrifice must be thanksgiving to God the benefactor.” Leonhardt, Jewish Worship in Philo, 253.
16 The Worse Attacks the Better, 21. I analyze this passage below, p.93.
17 Leonhardt, Jewish Worship in Philo, 238.
18 E.g., “These are the stated contents of the ordinance (Lev 1). But another meaning (νοῦς ἔτερος) is disclosed, an enigmatic matter conveyed by symbols; visible words are symbols of unseen and non-evident matters. For example, the whole-burnt offering is male because it is more complete, more dominant and more suited to active motivation than the female, which is imperfect, subject, and is proven to be more passive than active...” The Special Laws 1.200.
19 Hayward, Jewish Temple, 108-141. For a similar but more theoretically inclined approach, see William K. Gilders, “Jewish Sacrifice, Its Nature and Function (According to Philo),” in Ancient
objective is to uncover the “meaning and significance” of the Temple “Service,” he finds that Philo’s interpretations of Temple matters are “highly wrought, multi-layered, and sometimes inconsistent” and that “his knowledge of Greek thought… [has] profoundly affected his presentation of the Temple and its Service.” In my view, Philo’s allegorical interpretations of textual matters related to the cult shed more light on his exegetical-philosophical practices than they do on his understanding of the practice of offering sacrifices, for which his critical statements furnish better evidence.

Third, scholars have sometimes suggested that Philo had some particular issue with animal sacrifice as a mode of religiosity. In Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews, for example, Ronald Williamson asserts, “Clearly Philo felt somewhat uneasy about the whole business of animal sacrifice.” While Philo does on one occasion state, “thank offerings of incense are better (κρείττων) than those of blood,” I will show that he takes issue at times with all material offerings for God, including votive offerings, temple construction and ornamentation, and even the singing of praise. Philo almost never singles out animal sacrifice, as do many modern scholarly treatments.

Finally, Philo has sometimes been plotted as a midway point on a positive, evolutionary trajectory away from animal sacrifice that begins with philosophers of the Mediterranean Sacrifice (ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 160-178.

20 Hayward, The Jewish Temple, 5.
21 Hayward, The Jewish Temple, 5.
22 Hayward, The Jewish Temple, 140.
24 Special Laws 1, 275. Leonhardt argues on the basis of this brief comment: “The preference of the incense offering moves the sacrifices away from blood offerings and onto a more spiritual level.” Leonhardt, Jewish Worship in Philo, 239.
so-called “Hellenistic enlightenment,” who made some critical statements about sacrifice, and culminates with the early Christians, who rejected sacrifice altogether. It has been shown, however, that the kinds of arguments that Philo makes about sacrifice, while displaying many continuities with Platonic thought, have little in common with the statements and arguments about sacrifice that appear in our earliest Christian texts, most notably the Epistle to the Hebrews. Hence, there is little evidence for positing a genealogical development between these corpora.

I turn now to the evidence. Where Philo expounds upon sacrifice directly and at length, he most frequently pursues two closely related arguments, both of which have clear precedents in Greek philosophy. First, Philo argues that sacrifices and other material offerings are inferior to intellectual expressions of gratitude to God, who might only be approached by the human mind or soul. Second, Philo argues that it is mistaken to believe that sacrifices have the capability to truly please God, let alone to bribe or flatter him, for God is perfectly omniscient and impartial, and has no need or desire for anything. In the following paragraphs I present several passages that contain one or both of these arguments. I have chosen to quote the passages at length, since scholarly treatments that paraphrase or quote only snippets of the passages often misrepresent the contours and the force of Philo’s arguments, and also detract from the considerable clarity and eloquence with which he articulates them.

In the following passage from Concerning Noah’s Work as a Planter, which is an illustration of the principle that “the fruit of instruction is not only holy but also

26 Thompson, “Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice,” 578.
27 Williamson, Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews, 182-3.
praiseworthy,” Philo makes the point that noetic praise is superior to sacrifice and the singing of hymns in demonstrating gratitude to God:

Each of the virtues is a holy thing, but thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία) is exceedingly so. It is impossible, however, to truly give thanks to God through those means to which the many (οἱ πολλοί) are accustomed (νομίζουσιν), furnishing votive offerings and sacrifices—for the whole world could not be a temple sufficient for his honor—rather, [one gives thanks] through songs and praise, not those the voice sings aloud, but those which the unseen and most pure mind (νοῦς) will sing out and resound.28

Philo observes that common people believe that offering sacrifices and votive offerings in temples constitutes the preeminent means of expressing gratitude to God. God’s honor is so great, however, that not only material offerings but also audible songs of praise are unfit to properly render him thanks. Although Philo appears to contradict this point elsewhere, in this passage he maintains that only the silent praise of the “unseen and most pure mind” is capable of expressing gratitude to God in a suitable manner.29 Philo similarly subordinates sacrifices and other material offerings for God to expressions of the mind in the following passage from The Worse Attacks the Better. The passage is part of an illustration of the principle that “one should undertake to practice each skill skillfully,” that is, in accordance with the particular logic of its practice.30 In this regard, Philo argues, it is a “dead end” (ἀνοδία) to practice “piety superstitiously” (εὐσέβειαν

28 Concerning Noah’s Work as a Planter, 126.
29 A similar argument is made in the following passage from The Special Laws: “God does not rejoice in sacrifices (θυσίαις), even if one were to offer hecatombs, for everything belongs to him, though he, the possessor, is in need of no thing. He rejoices, rather, in pious dispositions (φιλοθείς γνώμαις) and in men who practice piety (ἀνδράσιν ἀσχηταίς ὀσότητος), from whom he happily accepts (δέχεται) barley and items of least expense, in favor of those of greatest expense, as most honorable. Even if they bring nothing else, in offering themselves they offer the best sacrifice (τὴν ἀριστιάν θυσίαν), the most perfect fulfillment of their noble conduct (πλήρωμα καλοκαθάρίας τελειώτατον). They honor God the benefactor and savior with hymns and prayers, sometimes with speech organs, sometimes without the lips or tongue, when within the soul alone the noetic elements (τάς νοητάς) produce tale or outcry, which one ear alone can receive, God, for the ears of humans cannot perceive [such things]” (1: 271-272).
30 The Worse Attacks the Better, 18.
This includes, among other things, believing that sacrifices and temple construction and ornamentation have the capability to bribe or flatter God:

If one establishes a temple provided with the most brilliant furnishings and extravagances; or if he offers up hecatombs and never ceases sacrificing bulls; or if he adorns the temple with expensive votive offerings, bringing abundant materials and craftsmanship more valuable than silver or gold; let him still not be inscribed among the pious, for he has strayed from the way of piety, holding to religious cult (θρησκείαν) instead of piety (ὁσιότητος), and giving gifts (δώρα) to one not subject to bribes (αδεξάστω) who will never take (ληψομένῳ) such things, and flattering one who is not liable to flattery, who embraces genuine service (θεραπείας)—and genuine service is that of a soul offering plain and singular sacrifice—truth—and he rejects all counterfeits, and those are counterfeit that are external displays of wealth.34

Philo here criticizes “mistaken” notions of human-divine reciprocity. The terminology and conceptual framework of gift exchange are prominent. It is inconceivable for Philo to imagine that God might be subject to the subtle manipulation or coercion that often characterizes human gift exchange, wherein gifts are sometimes aimed to bribe or flatter the receiver to the advantage of the offerer. God is impartial and will not be flattered by sacrifices, votive offerings, and elaborate and expensive temple ornamentation, all of which Philo refers to explicitly as “gifts” for God. God “rejects” such “counterfeit” offerings not only because of their manipulative purpose, but also because they are intended to index the status of the offerer as “external displays of wealth.”35

Philo sharpens his critique of mistaken notions of human-divine reciprocity in the following two passages, which deal with the sacrifices and other offerings of people who

31 This word literally means, “fearing the gods,” and occurs also in positive contexts, where it might also be rendered, “piously.”
32 On this term, see Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy, 11-12. Mikalson prefers to translate this term as “religious correctness.”
33 On this term, see Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy, 9.
34 The Worse Attacks the Better, 20-21.
35 Similar arguments appear in both Theophrastus and Plato. See Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy, 64.
have committed offenses against God. In the first of these, from *On the Life of Moses*, Philo asserts that sacrifices and prayers offered by the “ignorant and unjust” are offensive to God; indeed, they are not really sacrifices and prayers at all. In contrast, sacrifices offered by the “pious and just” are effective, because they are accompanied by virtuous dispositions and intellectual expressions of gratitude. These are the only “true” sacrifices, being the only components of sacrificial practice that make a mark on God’s ledger. This passage appears in a discussion of the pentateuchal altar of sacrifice:

Now [Moses] was accustomed to calling the altar in the open court the sacrifice-altar (θυσιαστήριον), being, as it were, the guard (τηρητικόν) and keeper of the sacrifices; though it consumes the limbs and parts of the sacrificial victims, whose nature it is to be consumed by fire, [it preserves] the inclination (προσαίρεσιν) of the offerer. For if he were ignorant and unjust, his unsacrificed sacrifices (ἄθυτοι θυσίαι), unholy victims (ἀνίεροι ιερουργίαι), and recanted prayers would be accepted (ἐνδεχόμενα) for complete destruction, for despite appearances these effect not a remission of offenses but a reminder. But if the offerer were pious and just, then his sacrifice would remain secure, even if the flesh were consumed, or rather even if he offers no sacrifice at all, for what is a true sacrifice (ἀλήθης ιερουργία) other than the piety of a soul that loves God, whose gratitude is rendered immortal and inscribed on a stele at God’s side, co-existing perpetually with the sun, moon, and all the cosmos.

The passage begins with a somewhat improbable etymology of one of the Greek words for altar, *thusiastērion*, which Philo derives from the words, “sacrifice,” *thusia*, and “guard,” *tērētikon*. The altar is a guardian in two senses. First, the altar destroys by fire the offerings of unworthy people, who, in attempting to alleviate their offenses with sacrifices, actually call attention to past misdeeds and bring about immanent judgment. The destruction, then, is two-fold; both the “ignorant and unjust” offerers and their unsacrificed sacrifices are consigned to destruction. Second, the altar is a guardian in that

36 Again, such arguments are commonplace in Greek Philosophy. See Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*, 62-65.
it preserves the intentions of virtuous people who offer sacrifice, even after the incineration of the offerings themselves.

This passage, too, invokes a reciprocal framework. Both sacrifices and prayers appear in the same transactional category, things that might be “accepted” by God from humans. Philo uses wordplay to make the point that the sacrifices of ignorant and unjust people are not really sacrifices at all, employing negative words having the same root as the terms for sacrifice that they conceptually negate. This already implies that real sacrifices are a conceptual possibility. Indeed, Philo goes on to state that the sacrifices of the “pious and just” are effective; they “remain secure” despite their consumption by fire and in stark contrast to those of the “foolish and ignorant.” Moreover, the “pious and just” need not sacrifice at all in expressing gratitude to God; the only “true sacrifice” is “the piety of a soul that loves God.” That is, the inclinations, dispositions, and mental expressions of the offerer are pleasing to God, not the substance of the offering.38 These statements carry an important and often overlooked implication: while a person might properly express gratitude to God without sacrifice, sacrifice only becomes improper in absence of correct mental qualities and preconditions. Philo’s characterization of the pious soul in the latter part of the passage has a significant reciprocal aspect. Such a soul expresses gratitude to God, who records this gratitude in a manner that corresponds to the recording of costly sacrifices and votive offerings in ancient temples. Instead of inscribing this act of gratitude on a stone stele, however, God inscribes it on a heavenly stele and installs it at his side, along with the Sun and Moon. Even when shorn entirely of its material elements, Philo’s “true sacrifice” retains its reciprocal aspect.

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38 See also The Special Laws, 1.201.
Philo elaborates on the offensiveness of sacrifices offered by the unjust in another passage from *On Noah’s Work as a Planter*. Here he maintains that such sacrifices are not only incapable of influencing God, actually they function as reminders of the very offenses that they were intended to remedy or allay:

Some have supposed the sacrificing of bulls to be piety (εὐσέβειαν), and they assign a portion to the altars from that which they [have obtained] by stealing, or a denied [debt], or defrauding creditors, or plundering, or seizure. These resolutely impure ones think that the punishment of their offenses is salable. But to these ones I would say the court of God is impartial (ἀδέκαστον), so that those who have guilty dispositions will be rejected (ἀποστρέφεσθαι), even if they offer up a hundred bulls every day. The innocent, however, will be accepted (ἀποδέχεσθαι), even if they do not sacrifice at all. For God rejoices in flameless altars around which the virtues perform choral dance, not in the great flames these ones kindle, ignited by the unsacrificed sacrifices of the unholy (αἱ ἁνιέρων ἄθυτοι θυσίαι); these are reminders of the mistakes and offenses of all of these ones, and Moses has spoken somewhere of a sacrifice that is the reminder of an offense (Num 5:15). 39

The reciprocal terminology of acceptance and rejection is again prominent. God rejects the ill-gotten sacrifices of people who have committed offenses and whose sacrifices are intended, ironically, to cause God to overlook these offenses in the manner of a bribe. As in the previous passage, the opportunity to achieve God’s acceptance without sacrifice is expressed with a conditional phrase; “the innocent will be accepted, even if they do not sacrifice at all.” Here, too, Philo asserts that the sacrifices of the guilty are not really sacrifices; they remain “unsacrificed.” Philo rearticulates this point employing different terminology further in *On Noah’s Work as a Planter*: “A bad person does not really sacrifice (ἱερουργεῖ), even if he were to offer up ten thousand bulls every day continuously, for his most necessary sacrifice (ἱερείον)—his mind (νοῦς)—is blemished,

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39 *On Noah’s Work as a Planter*, 108.
and it is unlawful for blemishes to come into contact with altars.” The point is not that it is better not to sacrifice, but rather that it is better to be virtuous and not sacrifice than to be guilty and offer sacrifices with improper intentions.

Philo’s arguments are similar to the biblical texts analyzed in the preceding chapters in depicting the offering of sacrifices as being analogous to gift-giving in human contexts. In particular, there is considerable conceptual overlap between Philo and the biblical prophetic texts treated in chapter three, which assert that Yahweh will not accept gifts from wicked and disobedient people who are deserving of punishment. Nevertheless, in my view closer parallels in both form and substance might be found in the writings of the Athenian philosopher Plato (c. 429-347 BCE), whose influence on Philo has been recognized since Late Antiquity. In the following section I shall briefly present some of the Platonic texts that bear the closest similarities to the Philonic arguments treated thus far. These similarities are of relevance not only because they are suggestive of direct intellectual influence, but also because they show that neither the conceptual association between sacrifices and gifts nor Philo’s critique of this association is limited to texts of specifically Judean or ancient Near Eastern provenience.

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40 On Noah’s Work as a Planter, 164. See also Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy, 65, for philosophical analogues.

41 Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy, 78, “When sacrifices are made in accordance with these nomoi [i.e., proper human conventions and laws] they result in benefits for mankind. Sacrifices are ‘gifts’ to the gods, gifts which honour them, and these ‘gifts’ are given in the context of charis, that is, they are ‘pleasing favours’ which are expected to be repaid, in some form, and they establish with the deity a charis relationship, the mutual exchange of favours. From Theophrastus we learn that sacrifices are primarily offerings burned on an altar, and they are mostly ‘first-fruit offerings,’ that is, a portion of goods, usually food, that humans receive from gods. Humans are entitled to the use and enjoyment of the whole from which the first-fruits have been taken. Essential to the success of sacrifices are the cleanliness of the clothes of the worshippers and the cleanliness and freedom from pollution of their bodies.”
In Plato’s *Laws*, for example, the Athenian law-giver introduces the following statement on sacrifices and other offerings as “the best and truest of words”:

For the good person, to sacrifice (θύειν) and interact (προσομιλεῖν) always with the gods by means of prayers and votive offerings and every kind of service (θεραπεύειν) for the gods is best, most virtuous, and most efficacious for the fortunate life, and especially fitting also. For the bad person, however, it is the opposite of all this. The soul of the bad person is impure, whereas the soul of the other one is pure. Neither a good person nor a god has ever rightly accepted (ὄρθων δέχεσθαι) gifts (δῶρα) from one who is defiled. Therefore, the great labor of the impious (ἀνοιόις) with respect to the gods is in vain, whereas that of the pious (όσίοις) is most worthwhile (ἐγκαιρότατος).

Like Philo, Plato’s Athenian protagonist draws a stark distinction between the sacrifices and other offerings of humans who are good from those of humans who are evil. The offerings of good and pious people are most efficacious and worthwhile, whereas those of evil and impious people are entirely in vain. Bearing further similarity to the passages analyzed above, Plato employs both the terminology and the conceptual framework of gift-exchange. In stating that neither a god nor a good person has ever accepted gifts from one who is defiled, Plato intimates that the reciprocal logic of gift-exchange is common to both gift-giving between humans and the offering of sacrifice to gods.

Plato attributes a similar argument to Socrates in the dialogue *Alcibiades*, where the latter expounds upon a Homeric passage in which the gods refuse to partake of “perfect hecatombs” offered by the Trojans because Ilium was “exceedingly hated” by the gods:

It would be strange indeed if the gods were to consider (ἀποβλέπουσιν) our gifts (δῶρα) and sacrifices (θυσίας) and not one’s soul (ψυχήν), whether someone happened to be pious (ὁσίος) and just. I imagine that they [consider the latter] far more than those costly processions (πομπάς) and sacrifices (θυσίας), which cities and individuals keep performing year after year, no matter how greatly they

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42 *Laws*, 4:716D-717A.
have offended gods or humans. But [the gods] do not take bribes (οὐ δωροδόκοι) and look down upon all of these things.\textsuperscript{43}

Like Philo, Plato here underscores the impartiality of the gods, who are not susceptible to bribes in the form of offerings from unjust people. In their deliberations they consider only people’s conduct and disposition rather than their sacrifices and costly processions.\textsuperscript{44}

Plato also criticizes what he presents as the opinion of common people, that the gods might be subject to flattery and manipulation by offerings, in this short passage from \textit{Laws}: “The worst and most numerous [people] are of the opinion that having received (δεχόμενοι) trifling sacrifices (θύματα) and flattery the gods will greatly assist them in committing large robberies and will often release them from punishments.”\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Alc.} 2.149C-150A; \textit{Iliad}, 8:548-552. See also Xenophon’s depiction of Socrates at \textit{Mem} 1.3.3.

\textsuperscript{44} The following section of dialogue between Socrates and Euthyphro is also of considerable relevance on this subject, though it is too lengthy for direct treatment in the main body of this chapter: “Soc: What, now, do you say is holiness or piety? Is it not something of a science of sacrificing and praying? / Euth: Indeed. / Soc.: And is not sacrificing giving gifts (δωρεῖσθαι) to the gods, and praying making requests of the gods? / Euth: Most certainly, Socrates. / Soc: Piety, then, would be a science of making requests and giving to the gods, by this definition. Euth: By all means, Socrates, you have understood what I said. Soc: For I am eager for your wisdom, my friend, and devote my mind to this matter, so that nothing you say might fall to the ground. But tell me, what is this service (ὑπηρεσία) to the gods? Do you say that it is making requests of them and giving to them? / Euth: Indeed. Soc: So, then, would not the correct manner of making requests be to request those things from them of which we need from them? Euth: What else? Soc: And the correct manner of giving, to give them in return (ἀντιδωρεῖσθαι) those things that they happen to need from us, for it would not be right to present gifts (δωροφορεῖν διδόνται) to one who has no deed of these things. Euth: You speak correctly, Socrates. Soc: Piety, then, would be something of an art of commerce (ἐμπορική) for gods and for humans between one another. Euth: Commerce, yes, if it pleases you to call it such. Soc: But it does not please me if it does not happen to be true. But tell me, what profit is there for the gods from the gifts that they receive from us? For that which they give is clear to everyone, for we have no good thing that they have not provided. But those things that they receive from us, what service do they provide? Or do we enjoy such an advantage over them in our commerce that we take all of the good things from them, and they take nothing from us? Euth: But surely, Socrates, the gods benefit from the things that they receive from us. Soc: But what could these ever be, Euthyphro, the gifts for the gods from us? Euth: What else other than honor and reverence and, as I already said before, gratitude? Soc: So piety is grateful but not beneficial or pleasing to the gods? Euth: I think it is pleasing above all else (Euth., 14C-15B).”

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Laws}, 12.948c.
The final point of continuity I shall draw between the Platonic and Philonic corpora is the notion that the sacrifices of the wicked precipitate imminent divine punishment, a notion that Philo expresses in two of the passages above. Plato articulates a similar concept in explaining the prohibition of private altars in *Laws*:

Moreover, [the prohibition of private altars] comes on account of the impious, in order that they might not act secretly in these matters, setting up shrines and altars in private households, imagining that they are propitiating the gods in secret with sacrifices and prayers. Infinitely compounding their own injustice, they render guilty in the eyes of the gods also the authorities, who are better than they, so that the whole city state will reap the yield of the impious, in some regard justly.46

The sacrifices and prayers of the impious “infinitely” compound not only their own guilt in the eyes of the gods, but also the guilt of those entrusted with their governance, thus making the whole city liable to suffer divine punishment. Like Philo, Plato depicts the gods as impartial judges who will not accept gifts from unworthy people; indeed, such gifts elicit immediate punishment.

Returning to Philo, in the following section I analyze several passages that do not express criticism or caution with respect to the offering of sacrifices, but rather provide instructions for its proper execution by way of philosophical commentary. The following passage from *On the Unchangeableness of God*, for example, reconciles a biblical text requiring sacrifice with Philo’s philosophical conceptions pertaining to God and ethics:

According to that most sacred writing of Moses, “My gifts (δῶρα), my presents (δόματα), and my burnt-offerings (χαρωπόματα),47 you shall carefully observe to offer (προσφέρειν) to me” (Num 28:2). For to whom else must one offer thanks (εὐχαριστήτεον) except to God, and through what means other than that which has been given by him. For it is not possible to abound in anything else. Having no need [for anything] he commands us to offer (προσφέρειν) to him which is his own, through the excess of his beneficence to our kind. For we, studying to

46 *Laws*, 10.910a-b.
47 LXX, like the MT, has the intervening text: “for a pleasing aroma.”
have reverence and gratitude for him, will purify our wrongdoing, washing away
the stains of our lives in word, thought and deed.\textsuperscript{48}

This passage highlights the tension between Philo’s joint commitments to the literal text
of the Pentateuch and to his own philosophical positions. Philo rationalizes the
Septuagint’s threefold demand that gifts be rendered to the Lord (κύριος), arguing that
the offering of gifts to God is intended for the benefit of humans rather than for God. In
order for this argument to proceed, it seems Philo has omitted the phrase “for a pleasing
aroma,” which is present in both MT and LXX versions of Num 28:2, and which strongly
implies that sacrifices are intended for God’s benefit, indeed, for God’s pleasure. It is
significant that reciprocity remains central throughout this philosophical framing of
sacrificial practice, even if reciprocal relations between humans and God are cast as being
irreconcilably imbalanced. Humans owe a debt of gratitude to God, creator and provider
of everything, which they cannot possibly repay because God needs nothing and can
receive nothing that did not already belong to him.\textsuperscript{49} Thus, according to Philo, the
offering of sacrifice has been ordained for human benefit. The practice allows humans to
cultivate the dispositions of reverence and gratitude to God, which in turn purifies people
from their misdeeds.

Instructions concerning the mental preconditions for proper and effective
sacrificial practice are also provided in the passage below, an excerpt from an excursive

\textsuperscript{48} On the Unchangeableness of God, 5-7.

\textsuperscript{49} There is again Platonic precedent for some components of Philo’s argument here. In Euthyphro,
Plato depicts Socrates interrogating Euthyphro about the nature of reciprocal exchange between
gods and humans: “Soc: […] But tell me, what profit (ὀφελία) is there for the gods from the gifts
(δώρων) that they receive (λαμβάνουσιν) from us? For that which they give is clear to
everyone, for we have no good thing that they have not provided. But those things that they
receive from us, what service do they provide? Or do we enjoy such an advantage over them in
our commerce (ἐμπορίαν) that we take all of the good things from them, and they take nothing
from us? (Euthyphro, 14e-15a).
discussion of the biblical prohibition against bringing the wages of a prostitute into the Jerusalem Temple (Deut 23:18). Philo exhorts those who would offer sacrifice to ensure both that their mental dispositions are sound and their ethical circumstances in accord with the particular interests their sacrifices are intended to serve:

He who is about to sacrifice (θύειν) must examine not whether the sacrificial animal (ἱερεῖον) is unblemished but whether his thinking (διάνοια) is perfect and absolutely composed. Let him also examine why it is worthwhile for him to offer sacrifices. For either he is giving thanks (εὐχαριστῶν) for previous benefits, or he is asking for (αἰτούμενος) security in the present state of affairs, or for the acquisition of future benefits, or for the averting (ἀποτροπίας) of present or expected evils, for all of which he is obliged to furnish his mind (λογισμῷ) with soundness (ὑγείᾳ) and well-being (σωτηρίᾳ). For if he is giving thanks for services already rendered, let him not be ungrateful (ἀχαριστήσατο) and base, for the favors (χάριτες) were given (ἐδόθησαν) to one who is virtuous (σπουδαίῳ). If he is securing present goods and expects benefits in the future, let him show that he is worthy of the benefits by being good. If he is asking for escape from any evils, let him not act in a manner that is worthy of punishment or penalty.50

In this remarkably practical and unmistakably reciprocal presentation, people offer sacrifices to God in order to request or to give thanks for the beneficial services that God might provide for them. Significantly, the passage permits insight into common, non-philosophical motivations for sacrificial practice, for Philo delicately disagrees with the logic of such practice. The latter part of the passage intimates that human conduct rather than the offering of sacrifice is the real source of divine rewards and punishments.

Philo also provides exhortatory advice pertaining to the practice of sacrifice in the following passage from Questions and Answers on Genesis. This advice is based on exegesis of Gen 4:3-5, which employs the Greek word “gifts” (δώροις) to refer to the offerings of Abel “from the first born of his sheep and from his fatlings,” whereas Cain's offerings “of the fruits of the earth” are referred to as “sacrifices” (θυσίαις):

50 Philo, The Special Laws, 1.283. I treat this passage also in the introduction, p1.
One distinguishes a gift (δῶρον) from a sacrifice (θυσίας) in that one who sacrifices (θύων) divides, pouring the blood on the altar and bringing the meat home, whereas a gift-giver (δωρούμενος) rightly surrenders the whole thing to the receiver (τῷ λαμβάνοντι). He who loves himself is a distributor like Cain; he who loves God is giver like Abel.\(^{51}\)

Philo takes no issue with the Septuagint’s reference to Abel’s animal offerings as gifts. Indeed, Philo embraces and elaborates upon the association: one who gives a whole gift to God is better than one who shares with God. Interestingly, Philo overlooks the fact that Cain’s “sacrifices” in Gen 4:3-5 are vegetable offerings, which do not provide blood.

Occasionally Philo makes statements concerning sacrifice that do not carry the exhortatory or philosophical burden of the statements discussed above, and these frequently cast sacrificial practices in a positive light. In the following passage from Concerning Noah’s Work as a Planter, Philo contrasts his contemporaries’ intemperate consumption of wine with that of the wise people of former times, whose custom it was to sacrifice before imbibing. This allows for Philo to derive the verb, “to get drunk” (methuein; μεθύειν) from the phrase “after sacrificing” (meta to thuein; μετὰ τὸ θύειν):

The people of former times would begin every good action with perfect sacrifices (ιερῶν τελείων), thinking this would result in a most auspicious end. [They would not begin anything] before praying and sacrificing, even if the occasion urged immediate action… Knowing, then, that the use and enjoyment of wine requires great care, they would approach unmixed wine neither frequently nor to satiety, but rather in appropriate order and at appropriate occasions. After first praying and offering up sacrifices and rendering God propitious (ιλασάμενοι),\(^{32}\) and having purified their bodies and souls, the former by bathing the latter by streams of laws and edification, radiant and happy they turned to relaxation. Often they did not go home, continuing on in the temples in which they sacrifice, in order that, keeping in mind the sacrifices and having reverence for the place, they might truly celebrate a most holy feast, doing no wrong either in word or deed. From this, they say, “getting drunk” (μεθύειν) is named, because it was the custom of former people to drink wine after sacrificing (μετὰ τὸ θύειν). To whom, indeed, could this manner of using unmixed wine be more fitting than to

\(^{51}\) Questions and Answers on Genesis 1.62.

\(^{32}\) On this term, see Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy, 11.
wise men, for whom even the act that precedes getting drunk is appropriate, namely sacrificing.\textsuperscript{53}

Philo’s presentation of sacrifice in this lengthy passage is entirely positive. When performed in the correct manner, sacrificing propitiates God and brings about auspicious outcomes, even when engaging in as risky an undertaking as heavy drinking. This is not the only place where Philo associates sacrifice with favorable yields in an uncomplicated manner. In \textit{On Drunkenness} Philo writes of wicked and impious people: “One ought to avert them even as a great disease, or famine, or plague or some other god-sent (\textit{θεήλατον}) evil, with prayers and sacrifices” (79). Philo makes a similar point in a similarly offhand manner in the following passage, which discusses the proper conduct for women:

A woman should seek solitude and should not busy herself with affairs outside the household. Let her not appear in the streets, roaming about in the sight of other men, except when she needs to go to a temple (\textit{εἰς ἱερόν}). She should take care not to go not when the market is full, but after most people have returned home, sacrificing and fulfilling her vows in tranquility, in the manner of a free citizen, for the averting of evils (\textit{ἀποτροπὴν κακῶν}) and participation in benefits (\textit{μετουσίαν ἀγαθῶν}).\textsuperscript{54}

Philo advocates that women remain within the domicile with one exception: in order to visit temples to offer sacrifices and fulfill vows in pursuit of the procurement of blessings and the aversion of misfortunes. In these three examples, each of which deals with a subject unrelated to the offering of sacrifice, Philo assumes the appropriateness and efficacy of this practice. This suggests that when Philo is not participating directly in the philosophical discourse of sacrifice, his position on the matter is relatively positive.

\textsuperscript{53} Concerning Noah’s Work as a Planter, 161-4.
\textsuperscript{54} The Special Laws, 3.171.
In this chapter I have shown that clear reciprocal valences are evident in all of Philo’s various statements about the practice of sacrifice. Throughout these statements Philo offers no final verdict on the advisability of offering sacrifices. On some occasions Philo views the practice positively; on others he expresses caution or criticism. Whatever its merits or pitfalls, however, Philo consistently views the practice of sacrifice as giving gifts to God. Philo’s most persistent argument concerning sacrifice assumes this conceptual association. Philo argues that God is not prone to bribery or manipulation by means of sacrifices, especially those offered by people who have committed serious offenses. This argument applies not only to sacrifices, but also to the other kinds of material gifts that inevitably appear alongside sacrifice in Philo’s presentations. All manner of gifts for God are liable to problematic motivations and mistaken assumptions and expectations, not only sacrifice. It is notable that when Philo subordinates the practice of sacrifice to mental dispositions or ethical circumstances, this typically involves either the expression of gratitude to God or God’s reward of virtuous conduct, both of which entail the logic of reciprocity. Jutta Leonhardt’s assertion that Philo “rejects the idea of the merit of the mere performance of ritual” is wanting for it neglects the precise reciprocal logic of Philo’s arguments.

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CHAPTER FIVE
Sacrifice and Reciprocity in the Dead Sea Scrolls

In this chapter I analyze discourse concerning the practice of sacrifice that appears in the often fragmentary, “non-biblical”\(^1\) texts discovered or attested at Qumran.\(^2\) Scholars have noted an apparent incongruity in the manner these texts present descriptions of and prescriptions for the practice of sacrifice. On the one hand, a strong polemic against the Jerusalem Temple priesthood runs through many of the texts. The Damascus Document, 4QMiṣṭat Maʿasê haTorah (“Some Matters of the Instruction;” hereafter: 4QMMT), and

\(^1\) I do not presuppose any manner of a fixed and/or recognized canon of biblical texts in the Second Temple period, especially among the sectarian social formation(s) associated with Qumran.

\(^2\) In this chapter I treat several texts whose earliest manuscripts have been discovered in the caves around Khirbet Qumran but that scholars generally consider to have been composed in circles other than the so-called “Qumran sectarian community,” namely, the Book of Jubilees, the Animal Vision known from 1Enoch, the Genesis Apocryphon, and the Aramaic Levi Document. There are several reasons for their inclusion here. First, the texts were kept and copied by the social formation(s) associated with Qumran, and scholars are in agreement that they were held in high regard there. Second, Jubilees, 1Enoch, the Genesis Apocryphon, and Aramaic Levi appear to have been cited in texts that scholars consider securely “sectarian,” suggesting that they were held to be authoritative to some degree. Third, there are many points of theological continuity between these texts and the more securely sectarian texts, to the degree that scholars suggest they may have been produced by progenitors of the Qumran community. Fourth, in my view it is not impossible that the texts were composed by the social formations associated with the securely sectarian texts. I believe scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls are sometimes overly hasty in positing non-sectarian authorship when they do not detect certain identifying characteristics or complete ideological consistency in a text. I discuss this complicated issue in more detail below.
other “sectarian” texts allege that the correct calendar of sacrificial festivals has been forgotten, the Jerusalem Temple (הַמִּקְדָּשׁ) defiled, and its priesthood corrupted.

Corresponding pronouncements are projected into the future in several apocalyptic texts evidenced at Qumran, namely 1Enoch, Jubilees, and Pseudo-Moses (4Q390). These allegations carry the implication that the sacrifices offered at the Jerusalem Temple are unacceptable and even offensive to Yahweh, having been offered on a polluted altar, at incorrect times, by wicked and incompetent priests. This implication is expressed directly in the Damascus Document, which appropriates prophetic terminology in prohibiting those who have entered “the New Covenant” (הברית הגדולה) from entering the Jerusalem Temple and kindling God’s altar in vain (CD 6:11-14; cf. Mal 1:10). On the other hand, the Damascus Document does not criticize the practice of sacrifice directly and even presents regulations for offering sacrifices. In addition, Jubilees, Aramaic Levi, the Temple Scroll, and 4QMMT each contain extensive presentations of regulations for sacrificial practices.

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3 For this chapter I define the term, “sect” (and its derivative, “sectarian”) as an exclusivist, soteriologically-oriented initiation cult, but not as one division of a religion among comparable divisions that together form a whole. There is little evidence that “Judaism” was divided into sects in the Second Temple period, and so I find the term somewhat misleading. There is an extensive bibliography on this topic. See, for example, Eyal Regev, Sectarianism in Qumran: A Cross Cultural Perspective (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007); Albert I. Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation (Leiden: Brill, 1997); E. P. Sanders, Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE (Philadelphia: Trinity International Press, 1994). For usage of the term, “sect” that is similar to my own in an entirely different context, see, Daniel L. Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Imperial China (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

4 CD 6:19, 8:21, 19:33.

5 If one accepts the Essene hypothesis, this position accords with descriptions of the Essene abstention from sacrifice at the Jerusalem Temple found in Josephus and Philo: “When they send what they have dedicated to God into the temple, they do not offer sacrifices because they have more pure purification practices of their own” (Josephus, Judean Antiquities 18:18); “they are above all men devoted to the service of God, not sacrificing living animals, but studying rather to preserve their own minds in a state of holiness and purity” (Philo, Every Good Man is Free, 12:75). I do accept the Essene hypothesis, though the present chapter does not depend on such acceptance or engage the question at any length. For a recent and cogent analysis of the Essene hypothesis, see, John J. Collins, Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).
performing sacrifice in public and private contexts that harmonize and expand upon biblical sources while similarly betraying no discomfort with the practice. Moreover, *Jubilees, Aramaic Levi*, and the *Genesis Apocryphon* contain lengthy accounts of exemplary figures from Genesis offering sacrifices in plainly reciprocal situations—giving thanks to Yahweh or attempting to placate his anger. In many cases these accounts have no direct biblical precedent. Finally, many of these texts repeatedly reiterate biblical formulae articulating the reciprocal efficacy of the sacrifices along both positive (pleasing) and negative registers (expiating offenses). To explain this apparent incongruity, many scholars have suggested that the Qumran sectarianists actually held the Jerusalem Temple in extremely high regard—hence their production and adoption of innovative texts related to sacrifice—but because their calendar of festivals and Sabbaths and/or their interpretation of purity regulations differed from those in force at the Temple, they withdrew from participation in the sacrificial cult and created something of a provisional, though deficient, replacement for the Temple in their religious community. Robert Kugler, for example, frames the matter thus:

The community that resided [at Qumran] revered the sacrificial cult and the priests as the means for establishing communion with God. Yet because they rejected the Jerusalem cult as corrupt beyond fair use, they separated themselves from the sanctuary, its practices, and its leadership. How, then, did the residents of Qumran make up for this critical deficit in their religious life?… In lieu of actually participating in the cult, the group’s members satisfied themselves with
redefining it according to their vision, surely in anticipation of their own return to
the temple one day.6

Jonathan Klawans similarly concludes, “the sectarian saw their community as a
provisional replacement for a temple, even though their provisional replacement fails by
comparison to a temple itself.”7 In my view, several elements of this reconstruction are
problematic, as I discuss in detail below.

I have four goals in the present chapter. First, I analyze a sizable body of
descriptive and prescriptive texts from Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon, Aramaic Levi,
and the Temple Scroll that deal with the practice of sacrifice in a positive and
unproblematic manner. I argue that by and large these texts present the practice of
sacrifice in the same manner as the Judean texts analyzed in the earlier chapters of this
study: the prescriptive texts employ gift terminology and reciprocal formulae; the
descriptive texts frequently present biblical figures offering sacrifices to Yahweh in
reciprocal situations, in order to render him thanks or to placate his anger. This material,
which has often been overlooked by scholars, supports the gift theorization of sacrifice
and suggests that the authors of these innovative texts did not adopt an innovative or
critical understanding of the practice of sacrifice. Second, I analyze those texts that carry
the implication that the practice of sacrifice at the contemporary Jerusalem Temple is

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6 Robert A. Kugler, “Rewriting Rubrics: Sacrifice and the Religion of Qumran,” in Religion in the
Dead Sea Scrolls (Ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 90-
92 [90-112]. “What we find… is repeated confirmation of the hypothesis that in lieu of
participating in the sacrificial cult the community contented itself with rewriting the rubrics that
governed the temple and its operations through harmonizing and narrowing exegesis… Thus,
while they did not completely fill the void left in their religious lives by their separation from the
temple cult, they did find a way to remain in contact with its operation through their interpretation
of Scripture… That they did not satisfy the group’s religious desires, and that the group’s
members were not restored to the temple as they wished, may account in part for the apocalyptic
mood at Qumran” (112).

7 Jonathan Klawans, Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supercessionism in the
inadvisable and even offensive to Yahweh due to the Jerusalem priesthood’s observance of an erroneous calendar and incorrect purity regulations. Scholars have suggested that the sectarian controversy with the priesthood originated in either of these two matters, perhaps precipitated by Hasmonean innovations at the Temple. None of the texts from Qumran, however, accuses the priesthood of having changed the calendar or purity regulations at the Temple, as we might expect if this were the case. This absence is all the more striking given the discrete, twofold nature of these accusations, which obtains even in texts considered very early or “proto-sectarian.” In addition, that each of these accusations proceeds along its own independent logic to conclusions that carry similarly adverse implications for the priesthood undermines the possibility that “pre-sectarian” groups formulated these doctrines without any thought to these implications. The first accusation relies upon astronomical reasoning and has no basis in biblical texts; the second is based in part upon stringent and harmonizing exegesis of biblical cultic texts. I prefer to interpret these assertions as religious ideology emerging already from a context of strategic competition and ideological contestation with the Jerusalem priesthood rather than as purely disinterested religious beliefs whose eventual connection to the priesthood was unintended and coincidental. In support of this reading, I show that several texts claim that the leaders have the ability to divine the will of God and to reveal the “hidden things” in Scripture, which, to my mind, suggests that they possessed techniques by

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8 This approach views the sectarians as a traditionalist protest movement.
9 Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, observes the multiform nature of the accusations, though he believes purity disputes are preeminent: “The criticisms leveled against the Temple, its practices, and its personnel are numerous and apparently operated on a number of distinct levels simultaneously” [147]. “There is also no evidence to the effect that calendar disputes led directly to any accusation that the temple was defiled, whether ritually or morally” [157]. “As if adding insult to injury, once the temple was considered morally or ritually defiled, it could easily stand accused of a host of other lesser transgressions” [158].
means of which they could produce novel yet authoritative religious discourse in line
with such competitive interests.

Third, I analyze the sectarian religious practices—particularly initiation,
purification, and prayer—evidenced in the Damascus Document, the Community Rule,
and other texts that scholars have argued are intended to provide a replacement for
sacrifice. I argue that although sectarian texts appropriate cultic terminology in the
articulation of these practices, the effects that the practices are said to bring about and the
religious conditions that they presuppose are completely foreign to cultic biblical texts.

Priestly texts pertaining to sacrifice such as Leviticus 1-15 state that sacrifices have the
capability to please Yahweh and to “wipe away” either the impurity generated by natural
occurrences such as childbirth or relatively minor offenses such as unintentional
violations of cultic regulations or Yahweh’s sancta.10 Sectarian texts, in contrast, assert
that those who receive purification, expiation of offenses, and initiation into the
“Community” or the “New Covenant” achieve eternal life, freedom from the control of
evil spirits, perfect wisdom, character improvements, and salvation from Yahweh’s
coming day of wrath. In my view, there is little parity between the “atonement” offered in
sectarian texts and that available at the Jerusalem Temple through sacrifices, which
undermines the notion that the sectarian community was intended as a provisional
replacement for the Temple cult.

I begin my treatment of the evidence with material drawn from several of the
apocalyptic texts attested at Qumran which contain descriptive and prescriptive materials
pertaining to sacrifice and which employ reciprocal terminology and concepts, namely

10 Jacob Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (ABD
Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon, Aramaic Levi, the Temple Scroll, and the War Scroll.

Scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls have argued that all of these texts were composed in circles separate from and prior to “the Qumran community,” and I will consider these arguments in my treatments of the individual texts below. I will, however, offer a preliminary observation here. In my view the criteria by which scholars have categorized these texts are problematic for two reasons. First, the criteria are too narrow: one gains the impression that if any text does not display every distinctive characteristic of the Rule of the Community or the Thanksgiving Hymns it is summarily categorized as a non-sectarian or proto-sectarian composition. To my mind, it is problematic to assume that every text produced in sectarian circles must incorporate every element of their distinctive theological lexicon, contain some statement of confessional group identification, and derogate their opponents. James Davila has argued recently that scholars should not necessarily attribute non-Christian authorship to every pseudepigraphic text that does not contain Christian “signature features;” mutatis mutandis this argument might also apply to the texts from Qumran:

Depending on the agenda of an individual writer and the nature and length of an individual work there may have been little or no reason to include explicitly Christian content. There may also have been incentives not to include it. An author writing in the name of an Old Testament character and wishing to convince his contemporaries of [the text’s] verisimilitude might well have avoided anachronistic references to Christian matters.

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11 As I detail below, scholars have deemed all of the apocalyptic texts treated in this chapter “non-sectarian” or “pre-sectarian” on the basis of a lack of terms such as “sons of light/darkness,” “Teacher of Righteousness,” and “Community” (יחד).

12 James R. Davila, The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other? (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 105; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 82. Also, “if we find Christian sermons and commentaries whose explicit purpose was to edify a Christian congregation or readership, but which nearly entirely ignore explicitly Christian matters when dealing with the Old Testament, how much more might we expect anonymous authors of parabiblical Old Testament narratives and revelations to ignore such matters when they hoped to persuade their audience of the genuineness of their story or revelation” [119].
The social formations associated with the Qumran texts were relatively long-lived and placed a high value on textual practices; to my mind it is possible that they may have composed a variety of imaginative texts with different features. Second, John Collins has recently marshaled strong evidence in favor of the position that the Qumran texts evidence a number of affiliated Essene groups, rather than a singular “Qumran community” and its non-sectarian or proto-sectarian forbears. This might help to account for both the diversity apparent in some of these texts as well as their shared sectarian characteristics.

The book of Jubilees contains a vast amount of material pertaining to sacrifice and warrants extended treatment. Fourteen copies of Jubilees have been found in the caves around Qumran, though complete manuscripts of the text have survived only in medieval Ethiopic translations. Like other apocalyptic texts attested at Qumran, the dating of Jubilees is somewhat conjectural, though a number of recent scholarly treatments date the original composition to roughly the second half of the second century B.C.E. on the basis of paleographic reasoning, alleged historical cues in the text, and apparent citations of Jubilees by other texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus. As for the

authorship of *Jubilees*, James Vanderkam has argued that it was produced by a forebear of the Qumran sectarians:  

*Jubilees* … belongs in the same stream of tradition as the Qumran texts but was composed before the specifically sectarian works were written. The relationship between it and the texts associated with the Essene group is another significant indicator that the author belonged to or was an immediate forerunner of the branch of Judaism we know as Essene.  

Vanderkam marshals two kinds of evidence in support of this conclusion. First, he notes significant parallels between *Jubilees* and more securely sectarian texts in matters of religious ideology such as predestination, the imperishability of the soul, the 364-day solar calendar, the specific date for the Festival of Weeks (the fifteenth day of the third month), Sabbath regulations, and the exaltation of the figures Judah and Levi. On the basis of these same points of continuity, Orval Wintermute has similarly described the author of *Jubilees* as “one of the spiritual parents of the Qumran sect.” Likewise, Michael A. Knibb has concluded, “there are very strong links between *Jubilees* and the Qumran sectarian writings and there can be no question that *Jubilees* belongs in the prehistory of the Qumran community.” Vanderkam’s second point is that textual evidence supports the notion that *Jubilees* was held in high regard by the Qumran sectarians:  

[T]he caves of Qumran contained some fourteen copies of *Jubilees*—a relatively high number which suggests that it may have attracted more than a little attention there. That attention is evident in several places and in fact a good case can be

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17 Vanderkam, *Book of Jubilees*, 142-3, “Whether these [Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes] were clearly distinguished when *Jubilees* was written is not known, and whether they were the only options, assuming they existed then, is also an open matter.”  
made that at Qumran Jubilees was considered an authoritative writing, much like the books that would later be recognized as components of the Hebrew canon of Scripture.\textsuperscript{22}

In support of this position, Vanderkam points out that the Damascus Document and 4Q228 appear to cite the book of Jubilees by name as an authoritative text.\textsuperscript{23} In addition, 4Q225-227, which have been labeled Pseudo-Jubilees, and 4Q217 appear to be reworkings of Jubilees.\textsuperscript{24} As Martha Himmelfarb points out, “the existence of a work or works labeled Pseudo-Jubilees (4Q225-27) indicates that Jubilees was of sufficient stature to warrant imitation.”\textsuperscript{25} Himmelfarb also develops Vanderkam’s observation that the number of copies is “relatively high”:

The number of manuscripts found at Qumran suggests that Jubilees had some kind of authoritative status there. There are more copies of Jubilees—fourteen or fifteen [4Q217]—than of any other work except the most popular biblical books: Psalms (thirty-six), Deuteronomy (twenty-nine), Isaiah (twenty-one), Exodus (seventeen), and Genesis (fifteen); to judge by the number of surviving manuscripts, then, Jubilees was hardly less popular than the biblical books whose stories it retells.\textsuperscript{26}

Himmelfarb, however, goes on to disagree with Vanderkam’s ascription of the text to a “forerunner” of the Qumran sectarians, arguing instead that the text is “antisectarian”\textsuperscript{27} in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Vanderkam, Book of Jubilees, 143-4.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Vanderkam, Book of Jubilees, 144-5. CD 16:2-4: “As for the explanation of the times of Israel’s blindness in all these matters, it is specified in the book of the division of the times into their jubilees and into their weeks.” 4Q228 appears to contain the words, “the divisions of the times” as well as the phrase, “thus it is written in the divisions,” where the text breaks off. Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 53, points out that this is “terminology elsewhere used for quotations from scripture.” The beginning and ending verses of the Ethiopic version suggest a similar title as that cited in CD and 4Q228: “These are the words regarding the divisions of the times of the law and of the testimony, of the events of the years, of the weeks of their jubilees throughout all the years of eternity” (Jub. 1.1). “Here, the words regarding the divisions of the times are completed” (Jub. 50:12).
\item \textsuperscript{24} Vanderkam, Book of Jubilees, 144.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 81. “Nowhere in this account or in Jubilees 1 is Israel divided into a doomed majority and a righteous remnant. Rather, Jubilees chooses a language that includes the entire people of Israel” [83].
\end{itemize}
character: “In striking contrast to the sectarians, Jubilees insists that all Jews were singled out by God from the beginning of the world, and they continue to be his holy people for all time.” In support of this claim, Himmelfarb points to two eschatological passages. In the first, God depicts a scenario in which all Israel will eventually turn aside from their wicked apostasy and return to God (Jub. 1:15-18). Himmelfarb reads this passage as a challenge to the social dualism pertaining to the damned and the saved that is characteristic to works such as the Rule of the Community. In the second, the antagonists of the eschatological conflict are depicted as young and old, poor and rich, lowly and great, the needy with the ruler (Jub. 23:19), that is, not the good and the evil or the damned and the saved. To my mind, however, the fact that Jubilees does not inscribe the damnation of the majority into its eschatological scenario does not provide firm evidence that its author was writing from a more inclusive, “antisectarian” socio-religious position. Indeed, the portrayal of an eschatological scenario in which all Israelites turn aside from the widespread “apostasy” of the majority and embrace the religious program of the author of the text might be viewed as a fantasy of complete sectarian victory. Moreover, Himmelfarb’s argument does not do justice to the numerous and significant points of theological overlap between Jubilees and the more securely sectarian texts of the DSS corpus; Himmelfarb recognizes but does not explain their very precise shared piety. Finally, Himmelfarb herself argues that Jubilees was embraced almost immediately after its composition as an authoritative text by the Qumran sectarians, the very people whom she alleges Jubilees is criticizing directly. If the text is

28 Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 81.
29 Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 81.
30 Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 82-3.
31 Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 53.
an “antisectarian” reaction to the “strongly sectarian outlook” characteristic of the Qumran sectarians as Himmelfarb maintains, this outcome is puzzling.

As for subject matter, Jubilees provides a brief narrative account of the revelation to Moses on Sinai by an “angel of the presence” as well as the content of this revelation, which appears to be a retelling of Genesis 1–Exodus 12.\(^{32}\) This retelling frequently integrates regulations and practices from other, purportedly “later,” biblical texts into the Genesis narrative, often harmonizing discrepancies between differing biblical sources.

Of particular relevance for the present study, Jubilees contains numerous lengthy depictions of exemplary biblical figures from Genesis offering sacrifices for festivals and other occasions, and these depictions frequently give way to expositions of biblically-based regulations for the public and private practice of sacrifice. Significantly, this descriptive and prescriptive material pertaining to sacrifice is presented without exception in a positive and unproblematic manner; Jubilees introduces no problem or issue whatsoever with the practice of sacrifice. Moreover, Jubilees contains numerous passages that explicitly articulate the reciprocal efficacy of sacrifices along both positive and negative registers.\(^{33}\) Below I quote Jubilees’s account of Noah’s offering of sacrifices after his disembarkation from the ark (cf. Gen 8:20-21), which illustrates many of these features. Remarkably, a fragmentary passage of the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) provides what appears to be a parallel account of Noah’s sacrifices. I translate relevant


\(^{33}\) Jubilees 4:2 articulates the acceptance and rejection of sacrifice (Gen 4:3-5): “And at the beginning of the third Jubilee, Cain killed Abel because the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, but the offering of Cain was not accepted.”
portions in footnotes below, and also provide the Aramaic, which may shed light on the underlying Hebrew text of *Jubilees*: 34

On the first [day] of the third month, [Noah] left the ark and built an altar on [Lubar] mountain. He appeared on the earth, took a kid, and atoned with its blood for all the sins of the earth, 35 because everything that was on it had been obliterated except those who were in the ark with Noah. He placed the fat on the altar. 36 Then he took a bull, a ram, a sheep, goats, salt, a turtledove, and a dove and offered them as a burnt offering on the altar. He poured on them an offering [of grain] mixed with oil, sprinkled wine, and put frankincense on everything. 37 He sent up a pleasant fragrance that was pleasing before the Lord. 38 The Lord smelled the pleasant fragrance and made a covenant with him that there would be no flood waters which would destroy the earth (*Jub.* 6:1-4). 39

Material from a variety of biblical sources pertaining to sacrifice has been integrated and even expanded upon within the narrative framework of Gen 8:20-21. Noah’s initial sacrifice in the Jubilees account appears to be a purification/offense sacrifice (*חטאת*), as he places only the fat of the kid on the altar and effects atonement through it. 40 This has no precedent in Gen 8:20, which states merely that Noah “took from every kind of clean cattle and every kind of clean bird and he offered up ascending offerings [i.e., burnt offerings] on the altar.” The statement that Noah “atoned with its blood for all the sins of the earth” is fascinating, for it represents a significant departure from Priestly instructions concerning this kind of sacrifice. Biblical texts prescribe purification/offense sacrifices in

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35 1QapGen 10:13: “I wiped clean [the slate] (i.e., performed rites of expiation) for the entire world, all of it” (*ותרבדה על נחר אפורה*).

36 1QapGen 10:14: “I burned the fat on the fire” (*וַתַּרְבֹּדֶה על נַר אֲפֻרָה*).

37 1QapGen 10:16: “[…] on the altar, an offering. […] on it I put fine flour mixed together with oil with frankincense as tribute” (*לְמֵנָחַא לָבִונָא עִם בֵּשַׁח פִּילָא סֻלַּת יְהִבֻּא עליה*).

38 1QapGen 10:17: “I put salt on all of them and the odor of my burnt offerings ascended to the heavens” (*סָלָכָא לְשֵׁם יְהוָה וְחַלָּה מֵפִי פִּילָא מְשׁוַעְתָּם עַל לֵבָז מִלֵּנָה*).

39 Trans., James C. Vanderkam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 511; Scriptores Aethiopici 88; Louvain: Peters, 1989), 36-37. Unless otherwise noted, the translations rely upon Ethiopic mss and hence shed little light on the underlying Hebrew terminology.

40 See Lev 4:12, 21.
order to wipe away certain kinds of natural “impurity” and unwitting violations of cultic regulations, not the heinous offenses that are said to have occasioned the flood, namely fornication, defiling marriages between angels and human women, and the shedding of innocent blood (Jub. 7:21-5). Moreover, no biblical text ever claims or assumes that this or any other kind of sacrifice is able to effect atonement for the land.\footnote{Num 35:33, an H text, specifically states that blood that has been shed on the land cannot be wiped away except by the blood of murderers. Deut 32:43 states, “he will wipe clean the land of his people,” but the agent is Yahweh and sacrifice is not mentioned. See Jonathan Klawans, \textit{Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26-31.} The following section of the passage provides expansive explication of Gen 8:20’s “every kind of clean cattle… and birds,” enumerating the animals that Noah offered as burnt offerings: “a bull, a ram, a sheep, goats, salt, a turtledove, and a dove.” The likely source of this list is Lev 1, which provides instructions for ascending offerings of bulls (v.2-9), sheep and goats (v.10-13), doves and turtle doves (v.14-17). The salt, grain, wine and frankincense—all of the trappings for a special meal—also have clear biblical bases.\footnote{Wine libations and grain offerings kneaded with oil: Num 29; frankincense: Lev 2; salt Ezek 43:24.} That the “sweet aroma” of the sacrifices is “pleasing before the Lord” is consistent with Gen 8:21 (“Yahweh smelled the pleasing aroma…”) and likewise expresses the reciprocal efficacy of the sacrifices; Noah has given the Lord something pleasing. The passage, then, not only integrates various biblical regulations concerning sacrifice into a primeval narrative; it also reiterates and even expands upon biblical statements pertaining to the efficacy of sacrifice.

In addition to explicating Genesis narratives, \textit{Jubilees} also interpolates narrative material into the framework of Genesis in order to establish the antiquity of particular regulations for such matters as circumcision (Jub. 15:9-33), the prohibition against
consuming blood (Jub. 6:7-14), and Sabbath observance (Jub. 50:1-13). In this vein, exemplary figures are frequently depicted offering sacrifices at the inaugural celebration of certain Israelite public festivals: Noah inaugurates the festival of weeks (Jub. 6:15-22); Abraham, the festival of tabernacles; Jacob, the addition to the festival of tabernacles (Jub. 32:27-29); Adam, the morning incense offering (Jub. 3:27); and Enoch, the evening incense offering (Jub. 4:25). Below I quote the account of Abraham celebrating the first occurrence of the Festival of Booths, for this account displays strong reciprocal resonances. The occasion for celebration is a visit by angels to Abraham and Sarah, who is pregnant with Isaac. The angels bless Abraham and Sarah, and foretell the greatness that their descendants shall achieve, especially their grandson Levi (Jub. 16:15-20).

Abraham, overjoyed with the news, proceeds to celebrate the festival:

[Abraham] built an altar for the Lord who had rescued him and who was making him so happy in the country where he resided as an alien. He celebrated a joyful festival in this [seventh] month—for seven days—near the altar which he had built at the well of the oath. He constructed tents for himself and his servants during this festival. He was the first to celebrate the festival of tabernacles on the earth. During these seven days he was making—throughout all the days, each and every day—an offering to the Lord on the altar: two bulls, two rams, seven sheep, and one goat for sins in order to atone through it for himself and his descendants, and as a peace offering: seven rams, seven kids, seven sheep, seven he-goats as well as their offerings [of grain] and their libations over all their fat—[all this] he would burn on the altar as a choice offering for a pleasing fragrance... He celebrated this festival for seven days, being happy with his whole heart and all his being—he and all those who belonged to his household (16:21-25).

This passage is similar to the one treated above in that it presents no hint of a problem with the practice of sacrifice, and the sacrifices are likewise said to be effective along both registers of the reciprocal scale, creating a pleasing aroma for the Lord, and atoning for sins. That “sin” sacrifices might atone for the sins of Abraham’s descendants

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43 Himmelfarb, Kingdom of Priests, 56.
represents another significant departure from Priestly instructions for purification/offense sacrifices, which make no such assertion. It is remarkable that *Jubilees*, without any biblical prompting, introduces the celebration of the festival of Booths into a social context that bears strong reciprocal overtones: Sarah and Abraham are extremely happy (16:19) because the Lord has promised great things for their progeny (16:26), which suggests that the celebrations are suffused with feelings of gratitude. A later verse relates that during the mornings of the festival, “[Abraham] would give praise and joyfully offer humble thanks to his God for everything” (16:31). Similar terminology also features in a final description of the celebrations:

[Abraham] gave a blessing and was very happy. He named this festival the festival of the Lord—a joy acceptable to the most high God… For this reason it has been ordained on the heavenly tablets regarding Israel that they should celebrate the festival of tabernacles joyfully for seven days during the seventh month which is acceptable in the Lord’s presence (*Jub.* 16:27-29).45

Not only the offerings but also the joyous celebration of this sacrificial feast is something acceptable to the Lord.46

Regulations for Sabbath sacrifices also associate the offering of sacrifices with joyous feasting and the maintenance of relations with Yahweh:

For great is the honor which the Lord has given Israel to eat, drink, and be filled on this festal day; and to rest on it from any work that belongs to the work of mankind, except to burn incense and to bring before the Lord offerings and

46 This is just one of several passages that portray various sacrificial festivals as a time of joyful feasting and giving thanks to God. The description of the first Passover is similar: “All Israel was eating the paschal meat, drinking the wine, and glorifying, blessing, and praising the Lord, God of their fathers” (*Jub.* 49:6). Wine Festival: “And he placed all their offerings mingled with oil upon it, and afterwards he sprinkled wine on the fire which he had previously made on the altar, and he placed incense on the altar and caused a sweet savor to ascend acceptable before the Lord his God. And he rejoiced and drank of this wine, he and his children, with joy” (*Jub.* 7:1-6) On the connection between sacrificial feasting and joy in biblical and rabbinic sources, see Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn a time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 109-126.
sacrifices for the days and the Sabbaths. Only this work is to be done on the Sabbath days in the sanctuary of the Lord your God in order that they may atone continuously for Israel with offerings from day to day as a memorial that is acceptable before the Lord; and in order that he may receive them forever, day by day, as you were ordered (50:10-11).\textsuperscript{47}

The Sabbath is a time for eating and drinking to satiety. All manner of work is prohibited with the exception of offering sacrifices to the Lord. These are effective in two regards: first, they atone continuously for Israel; second, they are daily memorials of Israel for the Lord.

In addition to such regulations for the public offering of sacrifices at appointed times, \textit{Jubilees} also provides instructions for individual sacrifices. \textit{Jub.} 21:7-15 summarizes Priestly regulations for the offering of "peace" sacrifices (שלמים) in the narrative context of a set of final instructions from Abraham to Isaac before his death:

\begin{quote}
If you [Isaac] slaughter a victim for a peace offering that is acceptable, slaughter it and pour the blood onto the altar. All the fat of the sacrifice you will offer on the altar with the finest flour; and the offering [of grain] kneaded with oil, with its libation—you will offer it all together on the altar as a sacrifice. It is an aroma that is pleasing before the Lord. As you place the fat of the peace offering on the fire which is on the altar, so also remove the fat which is on the stomach and all the fat which is on the internal organs and the two kidneys and all the fat which is on them and which is on the upper thighs and liver with the kidneys. All of this you will offer as a pleasing fragrance which is acceptable before the Lord, with its sacrifice and its libation as a pleasant fragrance—the food of the offering to the Lord. Eat its meat during that day and on the next day; but the sun is not to set on it on the next day until it is eaten. It is not to be left over for the third day because it is not acceptable to him, for it is not pleasing and it is not therefore commanded… Be careful about the kinds of wood that are used for sacrifice so that you bring none onto the altar except for these: cypress, silver-fir, almond, fir, pine, cedar, juniper, date, olive, myrtle, laurel, the cedar whose name is the juniper bush, and balsam… Apart from these kinds of wood there is no other which you are to use because their aroma is distinctive and the smell of their aroma goes up to heaven. Pay attention to this commandment and do it, my son [Isaac], so that you may behave properly in all your actions (\textit{Jub.} 21:7-14).\textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{47} Trans., Vanderkam, \textit{The Book of Jubilees}, 326.  
\textsuperscript{48} Trans., Vanderkam, \textit{The Book of Jubilees}, 121-125.
The first section of the passage integrates instructions for offering “peace” sacrifices from several Priestly sources in a straightforward manner (Lev 3, 7:11-20; Num 29).

Reciprocal terminology features prominently: the word, “acceptable” appears three times, as does the word, “pleasing.” The second part of the passage departs from biblical instructions, specifying the kinds of wood that are to be used for burning up Yahweh’s portions of the “peace” sacrifices. This comes with the fascinating provision that only these kinds of wood have a distinctive aroma that is capable of ascending to God’s heavenly abode. A similar provision appears in the Aramaic Levi Document, which text I discuss in more detail below. This is a remarkably practical and anthropomorphic understanding of how these sacrifices function.

Also of relevance on the topic of individual sacrifices, Jubilees depicts Jacob offering sacrifices in fulfillment of his vow at Bethel (Jub. 27:27; Gen 28:20-22, 31:13). This is significant for two reasons: First, Jacob does not offer sacrifices to fulfill the vow in the Genesis account; indeed, the biblical account does not include any mention of the repayment of the vow whatsoever. Second, offering sacrifices in fulfillment of a vow is an inherently reciprocal kind of social practice; the sacrifice fulfills or “pays” the contractual obligation that a person owes to God. Jubilees, then, interpolates an inherently reciprocal depiction of sacrificial practice in addressing a potential gap in the Genesis narrative:

In the morning Jacob told his father Isaac the vow that he had made to the Lord, and the vision that he had seen, that he had built an altar and everything was ready for offering the sacrifice before the Lord as he had vowed… [Isaac said,] “Be successful and carry out the vow that you made. Do not delay in carrying out your

49 In this presentation it appears that not only the aroma of the offerings but also the aroma of the wood is capable of pleasing Yahweh.

50 “From [these] are the twelve kinds he [Jacob] told me [Levi] that are fitting to offer up on the altar, for their pleasing aroma goes up to the heavens” ALD 7:5.
vow because you will be held accountable regarding the vow. Now hurry to perform it. May the one who has made everything, to whom you made the vow, be pleased with it.” ... On the fifteenth of this [seventh] month [i.e., Tabernacles] he brought to the altar young bulls from the cattle, 28 rams, 49 sheep, 7 kids, and 21 goats—as a burnt offering on the altar and as a pleasing offering for a pleasant aroma before God. This was his gift because of the vow which he had made that he would give a tithe along with their [offerings of grain] and libations... He was blessing and praising the Lord who had freed him from all his difficulties and who had granted him his vow. He tithed all the clean animals and made an offering of them (Jub. 31:26-32:7).  

In the Genesis account, Jacob merely vows that he shall adopt Yahweh as his god and pay a tithe to the newly inaugurated sanctuary at Bethel if God should provide him with food, shelter, and clothing. In the Jubilees account, Jacob repays the vow with sacrifices as well as a tithe.  

Isaac’s exhortation that Jacob hasten to repay the vow may be based in part on Eccl. 5:3-4 (“When you have made a vow to God do not be late in repaying it”). The depiction of Jacob blessing and praising the Lord for having “freed him from all his difficulties” further enhances the reciprocal aspect of the passage.

The Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20 or 1QapGen), a highly fragmentary Aramaic text discovered at Qumran in 1947, similarly presents biblical figures from Genesis offering sacrifices in reciprocal settings without problem or issue. As with Jubilees, the dating of the Genesis Apocryphon is uncertain, though Daniel Machiela has offered the mid-second century B.C.E. or slightly earlier as a sound estimate in his recent edition of the text. The authorship of the text is similarly unclear. Although the text was discovered at

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52 Jub. 32:2-3: “Jacob got up early in the morning on the fourteenth of this month and gave a tithe of everything which had come with him—from people to animals, from money to all utensils and clothing. He gave a tithe of everything. At that time Rachel became pregnant with her son Benjamin. Jacob counted his sons from him. He went up the list and it came down on Levi in the Lord’s share. His father put priestly clothes on him and ordained him.”  
53 Machiela, The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon, 142.
Qumran, Joseph Fitzmyer has argued cogently against those who would posit Essene authorship too hastily:

There is nothing in this text that clearly links it with any of the known beliefs or customs of the Qumran sect. There is practically no Essene theology in this work, and it is difficult to see what exegetical or doctrinal meditations were at work in the composition of this text.\(^{54}\)

Daniel Machiela agrees with the thrust of Fitzmyer’s argument, though he qualifies it in two ways. First, Machiela points out that though the text appears not have been composed by the Qumran sectarians, this does not exclude Essene authorship; “the Essenes appear to have been a rather large parent group of those who cordoned themselves off at Qumran.”\(^{55}\) Second, Machiela detects certain points of affinity between the *Genesis Apocryphon* and sectarian texts in matters such as esotericism, calendrical issues, and exultation of the patriarchs.\(^{56}\) Whatever its ultimate provenience, the *Genesis Apocryphon* was maintained and likely read at Qumran and therefore warrants consideration here.\(^{57}\)

The extant text of the *Genesis Apocryphon* contains three accounts of figures from Genesis offering sacrifices. As I mentioned above, the text contains a close Aramaic parallel to *Jubilees*’ depiction of Noah’s sacrifices upon his disembarkation from the ark (1QapGen 10:13-18; *Jub.* 6:1-4). I noted that this passage reiterates and even expands biblical formulae articulating the reciprocal efficacy of sacrifices. On the basis of this and other parallels a relationship of direct literary dependence is likely between the two texts, though the direction of influence remains unclear.\(^{58}\) The *Genesis Apocryphon* also contains two accounts of Abram offering sacrifices, both of which are part of its

\(^{55}\) Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon*, 135.
\(^{56}\) Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon*, 136.
\(^{57}\) Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon*, 135.
expansive retelling of Gen 13, which depicts Abram constructing altars but not offering sacrifices. The first of these depictions provides reciprocal details that are not present in the biblical text (Gen 13:2-4):

I [Abram] arrived at Bethel, at the place where I built the altar, and I built it again. I offered (ואקרבת) upon it ascending offerings (עלואן) and tribute (ומנחא) to God Most High. I called on the name of the master of eternity (עלמיא מרה), and I praised the name of God, and I blessed God. There I gave thanks (ואודית) before God for all the property and all the good things that he gave me, and because he had done well by me, and because he returned me in safety to this land (1QapGen 21:1-4).  

This passage and the corresponding passage in Genesis describe Abram’s return from Egypt with Sarai, Lot, and all his property. The Genesis account states only that Abram went “to the place of the altar that he made there earlier, and Abram called upon the name of Yahweh there;” there is no mention of sacrifice. The author of the Genesis Apocryphon addresses this gap by having Abram rebuild the altar in order to offer sacrifices. The reciprocal context of the practice is made clear by Abraham’s offering of thanks and praise to God for all of the good things that God has given to him. The second depiction of Abram offering sacrifices is based on Gen 13:18:

I [Abram] returned to my house in safety and I found all of my household safe and sound (שלם). I went and dwelt at the Oaks of Mamre which are in Hebron, to the northeast of Hebron. I built an altar there and I offered up (ואسكن) upon it an ascending offering and tribute (ומנחא עלא) to God Most High. I ate and I drank there, I and every man of my household (1QapGen 21:19-21).

This passage stands in contrast to the Genesis account, which states only that Abram “built an altar there [at the Oaks of Mamre] for Yahweh” (Gen 13:18). As with the previous passage, the author provides expansive explication of the biblical material in a manner that highlights and enhances the reciprocal setting of the text, perhaps in accord with the author’s expectations regarding the practice of sacrifice. While exchange

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59 Aramaic translations are my own on the basis of Machiela’s text.
terminology does not feature explicitly in the passage, the context is suggestive of reciprocity—there is much for which Abram owes thanks to God: Abram has returned in safety from surveying the expansive territory that God has recently promised to him and his ancestors (Gen 13:14-17; 1QapGen 21:8-18), and he has found his household safe and sound.

The fragmentary text known as the *Aramaic Levi Document* contains regulations for offering sacrifices as well as exultation of the office of priesthood, which it specifically associates with sacrifice. As with the previous texts, there are several indications that *Aramaic Levi* was held in high regard by the Qumran sectarians. Fragments of seven copies of *Aramaic Levi* have been found at Qumran; moreover, like the book of *Jubilees*, the *Damascus Document* appears to cite *Aramaic Levi* as an authoritative source, referring to “the words of Levi son of Jacob” (CD 4:15).60 Indeed, with respect to content, there are numerous points of affinity between *Aramaic Levi* and *Jubilees*, to the extent that scholars have concluded that “*Aramaic Levi* (or something very like it) served as a source for *Jubilees*.”61 Finally, like *Jubilees*, scholars consider *Aramaic Levi* to have been produced in the early third or second century B.C.E. by socio-religious forebears of the Qumran sectarians:

*Aramaic Levi* does not bear the distinctive marks of Qumran sectarian language. Yet, in view of its [solar] calendar, two spirits, and other similar features, it seems most likely that it should be attributed to the wing of Judaism in the third century B.C.E. of which the Qumran sectarians were one group of descendants.62

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61 Greenfield, Stone, and Eshel, *Aramaic Levi Document*, 19. For example, Levi becomes a priest in accordance with the payment of Jacob’s tithe in both texts (*ALD* 5:2; *Jub.* 32:2). Both texts instruct Levi to wash his hands and feet before sacrificing (*ALD* 7:2; *Jub.* 21:6).
I question whether the absence of distinctive sectarian terminology in an apocalyptic text set in the distant and idyllic past indicates necessarily that the text was composed in non-sectarian or proto-sectarian circles. At any rate, the presence and influence of *Aramaic Levi* among the Qumran sectarians is sufficient to warrant its inclusion here.

*Aramaic Levi* contains instructions for offering ascending offerings that are far more precise than those presented in Lev 1 or any other biblical text.63 These instructions appear immediately after *Aramaic Levi*’s instructions pertaining to the wood for the sacrifices, which parallel those of *Jubilees* and likewise have no specific biblical precedent:

These are the [kinds of wood] that he [Jacob] told me [Levi] that are fitting to offer up beneath the ascending offering on the altar. When you have put any of these woods upon the altar and the fire begins to burn it, then you shall begin to sprinkle the blood on the sides of the altar. Once more wash your hands and feet of the blood and begin to offer up its salted portions. Burn its head first, and put the fat on it so that the blood of the slaughtered ox will not be seen on it. After it, its neck, and after its neck, its forequarters and after its forequarters the breast with the side and after the forequarters the haunches washed with the entrails. All of them salted with salt as is fitting for them in their quantities. After that fine flour mixed with oil. After all that pour out the wine and burn the frankincense over them. Let your actions follow due order and let all your offerings be acceptable for a pleasing aroma before God Most High (אַלְדָּד 7:6-8:6).64

These instructions supplement those of Leviticus 1, adding several practical details: the priest should wash his hands and feet; he should salt the pieces and burn them in a particular order; fat should be placed on the head of the ox to conceal its blood; wine,

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63 The relatively high quantity of copies of this specific passage found at Qumran might indicate that it held special relevance: “When the length of the book and the fragmentary nature of its preservation are considered, it is remarkable that this passage occurs in three copies at Qumran. Perhaps its position towards the middle of the work played a role. Yet, there are no Qumran fragments of the long passage 9:1-11:8 which follows it immediately” Greenfield, Stone, and Eshel, *Aramaic Levi Document*, 171.

64 Aramaic translation is my own on the basis of Greenfield, Stone, and Eshel’s text.
incense, and flour should be added last. As with the instructions for sacrifice that appear in *Jubilees*, these betray no discomfort with the practice of sacrifice; indeed, the passage elaborates upon the butchering of the animal without any manner interpretive or “spiritualizing” overlay. A later passage, preserved only in a Greek manuscript, exults the role of the priest as sacrificer, “Now, my child, I rejoice that you were chosen for the holy priesthood to offer sacrifices (προσενέγκειν θυσίαν) to the Most High Lord, to do as is established in accordance with that instruction (ALD 10:4).”65

The fragmentary text known as the *Temple Scroll* contains extensive prescriptive material that harmonizes and expands upon biblical regulations for the public practice of sacrifice at the Jerusalem Temple. Three copies of the *Temple Scroll* have been found at Qumran, the longest of which is also the longest of any of the preserved Qumran scrolls at sixty-six columns (11Q19=11QT).66 The text contains the tetragrammaton written in the same square Hebrew characters as the rest of the text, a scribal practice attested elsewhere in the Qumran scrolls only for the “canonical” biblical texts.67 Lawrence H. Schiffman, who has written more on the *Temple Scroll* than any other author, dates the composition of the *Temple Scroll* to roughly 110-90 B.C.E. on the basis of an apparent polemic against John Hyrcanus in a section of the text known as the Law of the King (11QT 56:12-59:21).68 The provenance of the *Temple Scroll* remains an open question,69 though Schiffman has proposed that the *Temple Scroll* was produced by a religious forerunner to the Qumran sectarians, much like *Jubilees*:

68 Schiffman, *Studies on the Temple Scroll*, 8-10. I am not as sure as Schiffman about this dating.
We see these two texts [i.e., *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll*] as derived from outside the community, perhaps from its antecedents. The sect would have read and studied these materials precisely because of the affinities they shared with its own beliefs and principles. The *Book of Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll* constitute part of the world from which the Qumran sect emerged and in which it strove to attain its own spiritual ideals.\(^70\)

Strengthening this association, Schiffman has also noted numerous and significant parallels between the *Temple Scroll* and 4QMMT, a more securely sectarian text.\(^71\)

A significant portion of the *Temple Scroll*—seventeen of sixty-six columns (11QT 13:10-29:10)—is composed almost exclusively of expositions of regulations for the consecration of the priests and for offering sacrifices at festivals.\(^72\) As with the texts treated above, this material betrays no hint of discomfort with the practice of sacrifice. Indeed, the text frequently reiterates biblical formulae articulating the reciprocal efficacy of sacrifices. The phrases, “pleasing aroma for Yahweh,” “pleasing aroma in the presence of Yahweh” or significant fragments thereof appear at least nine times in sacrificial contexts in the extant text (14:7, 15:13, 16:10, 20:8, 22:8, 23:16, 27:1, 28:5-6, 34:14). Expiatory phrases involving the verb, “wipe away” also appear at least nine times in sacrificial contexts (16:14, 17:2, 21:8, 22:2, 22:15, 26:7, 26:9, 27:2, 32:6). The *Temple Scroll*’s exposition of sacrificial regulations concludes with a remarkable elaboration of the role of sacrificial offerings in maintaining the relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites:

> These [are the appointed festivals of Yahweh that you shall proclaim as holy assemblies] to offer up ascending offerings [and tribute, slain offerings and libations] in the house upon which I shall cause my name [to dwell] forever, [they shall offer] ascending offerings, each on its day according to this instruction of

\(^{70}\) Schiffman, *Studies on the Temple Scroll*, 123.

\(^{71}\) Schiffman, *Studies on the Temple Scroll*, 145. In my view the criteria by which scholars have deemed the *Temple Scroll* non-sectarian are open to question.

\(^{72}\) For detailed analysis of this passage, see, Schiffman, *Studies on the Temple Scroll*, 297-380. Schiffman terms this portion of the text the “Sacrificial Festival Calendar.”
judgment continually, from the Israelites, aside from their voluntary offerings, all that they offer, all their vows and all their gifts that they bring to me for acceptance, and they shall be my people and I will be theirs forever. I shall dwell with them forever and ever, and I shall sanctify my sanctuary with my glory, for I shall make my glory reside over it until the day of creation, when I shall create my sanctuary, establishing it for myself for all days, according to the covenant I made with Jacob at Bethel.

This passage, which is suffused with reciprocal terminology, provides something of a purpose statement for public festivals at an idealized, perhaps eschatological, Jerusalem Temple. The first section of the passage appears to be based on Lev 23:37-38 and perhaps Num 29:39, the respective conclusions of the sacrificial calendars of the Holiness Code (H) and the Priestly corpus (P). The upshot of this section, an almost exact paraphrase of Lev 23:37-38, is that the festivals provide occasion for the Israelites to pay vows and to make other kinds of individual offerings in addition to the public sacrifices required for the festivals. It is noteworthy that the Temple Scroll preserves Lev 23:38’s usage of explicit gift terminology (“their gifts;”). This material differs from Lev 23:37-38 in three ways. First, it provides a Deuteronomic locution of the place where Yahweh will receive his offerings from the Israelites, a reference to the Jerusalem Temple Scroll.
Temple.\textsuperscript{78} Second, the text asserts that the Israelites are to offer the sacrifices in accordance with “this instruction of judgment,” which implies that the \textit{Temple Scroll} claims authority in matters related to the public cult.\textsuperscript{79} Third, the text omits mention of Sabbath offerings, which come first in Lev 23:38’s list of additional sacrifices (“each [sacrifice] on its own day, aside from Yahweh’s Sabbaths, and aside from your gifts…”). This omission accords with the solar calendar that the \textit{Temple Scroll} observes, wherein Israelite festivals never fall on a Sabbath.\textsuperscript{80} It also accords with the \textit{Damascus Document}’s prohibition of offering sacrifices on the Sabbath, for which Lev 23:38 provides a prooftext (CD 11:17-18). The second section of the passage combines certain phrases from Ezekiel with relatively novel material.\textsuperscript{81} Yahweh states that he will accept “them,” perhaps referring both to the gifts of the Israelites and the Israelites themselves. This statement of cultic acceptance proceeds immediately into a declarative description of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel: they will be his people and he will be theirs forever, dwelling in the sanctuary where he receives their offerings.\textsuperscript{82} The context is perhaps eschatological, which implies that the passage does not describe the current state of affairs at the Jerusalem Temple.\textsuperscript{83}

Following its lengthy treatment of sacrificial regulations, columns 30-42 of the Temple Scroll provide a plan for the construction of an idealized Temple. This plan includes instructions for offering sacrifices using various implements that are practically oriented and quite precise:

\textsuperscript{78} Yadin, \textit{Temple Scroll}, 2.127-8.
\textsuperscript{79} “An addition, emphasizing the author’s doctrine.” Yadin, \textit{Temple Scroll}, 2.128.
\textsuperscript{80} Yadin, \textit{Temple Scroll}, 1.117-8.
\textsuperscript{82} Yahweh dwells in his sanctuary, in contrast to Deuteronomic discourse, in which he causes his name to dwell there. Yadin, \textit{The Temple Scroll}, 2.127-8.
\textsuperscript{83} Yadin, \textit{Temple Scroll}, 1.183-4, 2.129.
[They] close the wheels… and fasten the heads of the bulls to the rings… afterwards they slaughter them and collect the blood in bowls, and they pour it out around the base of the altar. They open the wheels, and they remove the hides of the bulls from their flesh, and they chop them into pieces, and salt the pieces. They wash the innards and the hooves and salt them and turn them into smoke in the flames on the altar: bull by bull, its pieces with it, and its tribute of fine flour upon it, and the wine of its libation with it, and its oil upon it. The priests, the sons of Aaron, shall turn everything into smoke on the altar of offerings of pleasing aroma in the presence of Yahweh (מַהֲלַת אֶשֶׁת רְיחָן לְפָנֵי יְהוָה).

These instructions are similar to those from *Aramaic Levi* discussed above. They signal no discomfort with the corporeal aspect of the practice of sacrifice, and they contain details not present in Priestly texts.

Finally, a positive depiction of sacrifice also appears in the text known as the *War Scroll*, which describes an eschatological war between the Sons of Light, led by God, and the Sons of Darkness, led by Belial. While the well-known manuscript from Cave I is relatively well preserved (1QM), at least six other manuscripts of the *War Scroll* have been discovered in Cave IV which are highly fragmentary. As with the other texts discussed so far, the authorship and dating of the *War Scroll* are somewhat unclear. In his edition of the text, James Charlesworth proposes that the *War Scroll* “was composed in Palestine among a group of priests inspired by the Maccabean wars,” with the caveat, “the matter is still debated by experts.” I would point out that the text shares several characteristics with securely sectarian texts such as the *Rule of the Community*, most notably in strongly dualistic social divisions.

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84 11QT 34:5-14.
The War Scroll’s portrayal of sacrifice appears in a passage describing the arrangement of priestly leaders in a year of remission from warfare, “a Sabbath of rest for Israel” (1QM 2:8-9):

They shall arrange the chief priests behind the high priest and his assistant, twelve chiefs to serve (לשרת) continually in the presence of God. Twenty-six chiefs of the watches shall serve in their watches, and behind them twelve chiefs of the Levites serving continually, one per tribe. The heads of the watches will serve, each in his station, with the chiefs of the tribes and the fathers of the congregation taking their positions behind them in the gates of the Temple (המקדש). The chiefs of the watches and their appointees shall take their positions for their festivals, their New Moons, and their Sabbaths, and for all the days of the year—from the age of fifty and over. These shall take their positions for the ascending offerings and slain offerings, to prepare pleasing smoke for the acceptance of God (אל לרצון ניחוח מקטרת,) to expiate for his entire congregation (עדתו עבاد כל עדתו), to fatten continuously before him at the table of glory (לדותו לפניו תמיי בשויתו בברד).89

This passage prescribes an arrangement of priestly and non-priestly figures for the service of God that is similar to prescriptions for military arrangements that appear throughout the War Scroll. The offering of sacrifices is depicted as efficacious in three ways: pleasing God, effecting expiation, and, curiously, “fattening.” This latter detail might imply that the offering of sacrifices results in increase, or it might refer to the offering of fat.

The passages discussed above variously assume, reiterate, and elaborate on the reciprocal logic of sacrificial practice in a consistently positive manner. To my mind this material undermines the hypothesis that Judean religion was transitioning from sacrifice to prayer in the Second Temple period. Lawrence Schiffman, for example, has argued:

Like the rabbinic Jews later on, the Qumran sectarians and other similar groups were in the process of shifting from temple worship to prayer even before the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. The destruction simply hastened a long, ongoing process taking place in Judean society throughout the second temple period.

89 1QM 2:2-6.
period. The significance of prayer as a mode of experiencing God was on the increase.90

Although debate persists about issues of their authorship, there is general agreement that 
Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon, Aramaic Levi, the Temple Scroll, and the War Scroll, 
are all second or first century B.C.E. Judean texts, and it is significant that none of these 
texts questions the reciprocal logic and efficacy of sacrificial practices. In the next section 
of this chapter I analyze those texts that allege that the Jerusalem Temple priesthood 
oberves an incorrect calendar of sacrificial festivals and Sabbaths or that the 
priesthood’s incompetence has resulted in the defilement or profanation of the Temple 
and Yahweh’s holy offerings. While the upshot of these allegations—expressed directly 
in the Damascus Document—is that it is inadvisable to participate in the contemporary 
sacrificial cult of the Jerusalem Temple, the efficacy of offering sacrifices is never 
directly undermined.

Several texts evidenced at Qumran allege that the majority of the Israelites 
observe an incorrect, lunar-based calendar in contrast to the correct, 364-day, solar-based 
calendar espoused in sectarian texts.91 The report in Pesher Habakkuk, a securely 
sectarian text,92 that the “Wicked Priest” attacked or otherwise harassed the “Teacher of

90 Lawrence H. Schiffman, Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the 
History of Judaism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 89. See also Lawrence H. Schiffman, From 
Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism (Hoboken: Ktav, 1991), 
237.

91 On the topic of the calendrical texts evidenced at Qumran and their connection to 
Mesopotamian astronomical treatises, see Jonathan Ben-Dov, Head of All Years: Astronomy and 
Calendars at Qumran in their Ancient Context (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 78; 
Leiden: Brill, 2008). Ben-Dov argues that the various texts evidenced at Qumran that contain 
calendrical material, including Jubilees [40-44], evidence a “contiguous tradition” as opposed to 
“several such traditions, each creating its own discrete textual practice” [11]. This carries 
important ramifications for matters of authorship.

92 James H. Charlesworth ed., Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents (The 
Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English translations 6B; Tübingen: 
Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 1-2.
Righteousness” and his associates on the day of Atonement has suggested that the two observed different calendars: “At the appointed festival time of rest (מנוחת מועד טсанוה), the day of Expiation (יום הכפורים), [the Wicked Priest] appeared to them to swallow them and to make them stumble on the day of fasting, the Sabbath of their rest” (1QpHab 15:7-8). That the Wicked Priest was at liberty to antagonize the Teacher of Righteousness implies that he observed the fast on a different day.\(^93\) That a lunar calendar was observed at the Jerusalem Temple is rather more difficult to prove. The Hebrew Bible does not provide any systematic statement on how any of its calendars are to be calculated, whether in accordance with the moon or the sun or both.\(^94\) The Wisdom of Ben Sira (ca. 200-175 B.C.E.), which celebrates the Jerusalem Temple and its contemporary priestly leadership (Sir 50:1-21), offers some positive evidence for the observance of a lunar calendar.

Following a description of the fiery characteristics of the sun, the text describes the moon as a “ruler of time and perpetual sign”\(^95\) and asserts that it is employed in the calculation of festivals and other appointed times.\(^96\)

The allegation that the Israelites will adopt an incorrect, lunar-based calendar is articulated at greatest length in Jubilees:

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Now you [Moses] command the Israelites to keep the years in this number—364 days… If they transgress and do not celebrate [the festivals] in accord with this command, then all of them will disturb their times… All the Israelites will forget and will not find the way of the years. They will forget the first of the month, the season, and the Sabbath; they will err with respect to the entire prescribed pattern of the years… There will be people who carefully observe the moon with lunar observations though it is corrupt with respect to the seasons and is early from year to year by ten days. Therefore years will come about for them when they will
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\(^94\) Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 8.

\(^95\) Sir 43:6 (Ms. B, Heb: שלשה קד יא חנף לזר; LXX, Gk: ἀνάδειξιν χρόνων καὶ σημείων αἰώνος).

disturb the year and make a day of testimony something worthless and a profane
day a festival. Everyone will join together both holy days with the profane and
profane day with the holy day, for they will err regarding the months, the
Sabbaths, the festivals, and the jubilee (Jub. 6:32-37).

To my mind, the central thrust of this passage appears quite sectarian in tenor: the
Israelites—all of them—will adopt a lunar calendar at the expense of the correct 364-day
calendar, resulting in the profanation of both holy days, when the appointed sacrifices
will not take place in violation of pentateuchal regulations, and the holy festival
sacrifices, which will be offered to God on profane days. The central place of sacrificial
matters in calendrical discourse is further highlighted by the fact that three of the
“forgotten times” mentioned in the passage are occasions for offering sacrifices: New
Moons, Sabbaths, and festivals.

The extant fragments of an apocalyptic text known as Pseudo-Moses (4Q390)
depict the Israelites falling into progressively greater levels of apostasy with the notable
result that the correct calendar of Sabbaths and festivals is forgotten and the Temple
defiled. Devorah Dimant, who has published an edition of the text with commentary and
notes, tentatively dates the text to the last third of the second century.97 With respect to
authorship, Dimant argues that there are strong continuities between Pseudo-Moses and
the securely sectarian texts of the Qumran community: “Pseudo-Moses contains
terminology and ideas unmistakably close to the distinctive thought and style of works
originating in the Qumran community, and in particular to the first paraenetic part of the
Damascus Covenant.”98 Ultimately, however, Dimant argues that Pseudo-Moses belongs

97 Devorah Dimant, “New Light on the Jewish Pseudepigrapha - 4Q390,” in The Madrid Qumran
March, 1991 (ed. Julio Trebolle Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner; Studies on the Texts of the
Desert of Judah 11.2; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 447 [405-448].
to the same circle of antecedents to the Qumran sectarians that produced *Jubilees* and the *Animal Vision*, a text that I discuss further below:

*Pseudo-Moses* does not belong strictly to the circles of the Qumran community, but rather to a closely related one. This circle must have shared with the community a series of specific ideas, such as a negative attitude to the Temple and its priesthood, strict observance of the Sabbaths, the festivals, and probably the solar calendar… As precisely these features are shared also by certain pseudepigraphic works, the same circle must have been responsible also for such works as *Jubilees*, *Testament of Levi*, the Enochic *Animal Apocalypse*, and perhaps also *Testament of Moses* and the *Temple Scroll*. Such a group may well have been the parent-group from which the Qumran community emerged at a certain point, and whose ideology the community took up and continued to develop.99

In support of this position, Dimant points out that *Pseudo-Moses* lacks certain identifying terminology, namely, “Yahad,” “Teacher of Righteousness,” “Wicked Priest,” and dualistic terms.100 As I have argued above, in my view the lack of such identifying terminology does not render it an “inescapable conclusion”101 that *Pseudo-Moses* was produced outside of properly sectarian circles associated with Qumran.

Two lengthy fragments of the text survive, and they may depict segments of a single sequence of events.102

The sons of Aaron will rule over them but will not walk in my paths that I command you that you might observe (תעיד) them. They, too, will do what is evil in my eyes, like all that Israel did in the first days of its kingdom, aside from those who will go up first from the land of captivity in order to build the Temple (המקדש). But I will speak with them and send them a commandment and they will understand all that they have forsaken, they and their fathers. When that generation is completed in the seventh jubilee of the devastation of the land, they will forget regulations and appointed festivals and Sabbaths and the covenant and they will violate everything (4Q390 frag. 1: 3-12).

The second fragment provides a similar narrative arc:

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These things will come upon them [...] and there will be the dominion of Belial over them to give them up to the sword for a week of years [...] and in that jubilee they will break all of my regulations, and all of my commandments which I will command [by way of] my servants the prophets. They will begin to contend with each other for seventy years, from the day they break the vow and the covenant which they shall break. I will give them over to the angels of animosity (המשטמות) and they shall rule them. They will not know and not understand that I will be furious at them on account of their sacrilege by which they will forsake me. They will do what is wicked in my eyes, and they have chosen that which does not make me happy, dominating for wealth, profit and violence. People will steal their neighbors’ belongings, and they will oppress one another. As for my temple (מקדשי) they will defile it; as for my Sabbaths they will profane them; as for my appointed festivals they will forget them. With foreigners they will profane their seed; their priests will do violence… (4Q390 frag. 2 i: 4-10)

The passages both portray a history of Israel that is marked almost exclusively by disobedience and neglect of Yahweh’s commandments and regulations. The first passage notes that a single generation—the returnees from Babylon who will reestablish the Jerusalem Temple—will realize the gravity of their offenses against Yahweh, but after this generation the Israelites will again “forget” Yahweh’s regulations, appointed festivals, Sabbaths and covenant. Pseudo-Moses, then, traces the adoption of both an incorrect calendar and incorrect regulations to the generation immediately following that of the return from the Babylonian exile, rather than to recent figures such as the Hasmoneans. The second passage depicts Yahweh giving up the disobedient Israelites to the rule of malevolent angels. This results in ethical violations, the defilement of God’s Temple, the profanation of his Sabbaths, and the neglect of his festivals.

The allegation that Israel has gone astray from the correct calendar also appears in the Damascus Document, a text which scholars consider securely sectarian. Recent scholarly treatments have marshaled convincing evidence that the Damascus Document’s communal guidelines are intended for “marrying Essenes” in contrast to the Rule of the

Community, which legislates for celibate Essenes who live in “perfect holiness.” The Damascus Document has been known to scholars since the publication of two manuscripts of the text found in the Cairo Genizah. At least ten fragmentary manuscripts of the Damascus Document have been found in caves around Qumran, which, taken together, account for almost half of the text known from the Genizah manuscripts. Preliminary textual studies indicate that the Genizah manuscripts likely preserve “substantially reliable copies of the materials that they preserve.”

The allegation that Israel will abandon the correct calendar appears in a brief historical account of Israel’s apostasy and the (re)establishment of the sectarian movement:

The first ones who entered the covenant became guilty on account of [God’s anger], and they were given up to the sword by their abandonment of God’s covenant. They chose [to follow] their own will and they strayed after the fancy of their own heart, each acting in accordance with his own will. With those who held fast to God’s commandments who remained, however, God established his covenant with Israel forever, revealing to them the hidden things from which all Israel had gone astray: his holy Sabbaths, his glorious appointed times, his righteous testimonies, his true ways, and the desires of his will, which a person shall do and live thereby (CD 3:10-16).

This passage evidences the twofold nature of sectarian ideology; it claims to be at once long established—the sectarians “held fast to God’s commandments”—and at the same time novel—God revealed the “hidden things.” It is noteworthy that calendrical items involving sacrifice occupy the first two positions in the list of the “hidden things”: festivals and Sabbaths, likely referring to both the timing and required practices of each.

104 Collins, Beyond the Qumran Community, 27, 68-9. I will not delve into this issue.
107 “In the parlance of the group ‘hidden matters’ refers to what they alone had divined from the scriptures, matters to which all others from Israel were blind.” Vanderkam, Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 48.
That the Damascus Document espouses the same calendar of festivals and Sabbaths as Jubilees is suggested by the fact that the Damascus Document cites Jubilees as an authority on the periodization of history: “As for the interpretation of their times, when Israel was blind to all these matters, it is specified in the book of the divisions of the times into their jubilees and into their weeks” (CD 16:2-4).

The Damascus Document requires that initiates observe the sectarian calendar and other regulations “discovered” through divinatory textual exegesis:

[All those who are brought into the covenant] are to distinguish between the pure and the impure and to discern between the holy and the profane, to observe the Sabbath in accordance with its explication and the appointed times and the day of the fast as discovered (כמצאת) by those who entered the New Covenant in the land of Damascus, to offer holy things (הקדשים את הרים) in accordance with their explication, for each man to love his brother as himself, to hold the hand of the poor, and the needy, and the resident alien, and for each man to seek the well-being of his brother (CD 6:17-7:1).

Initiates, that is, those who have entered the “new covenant,” are required to observe a host of ritual and ethical regulations, including the sectarian Sabbaths, festivals, and the fast as “discovered” in the land of Damascus. As James Vanderkam observes, “those who entered this covenant... came to exact conclusions on the basis of their discoveries through scriptural interpretation, and these discoveries involved the precise keeping of Sabbaths, festivals, and the Day of Atonement.”

This geographical location is mentioned several times in the eponymous Damascus Document, where it is frequently

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108 This verb is used more frequently with tithes and priestly portions, which were probably observed in sectarian circles, than for sacrificial offerings for Yahweh in Temple settings. See Charlesworth, Damascus Document, War Scroll, 25.
109 Vanderkam, Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 48.
110 CD 6:5, 6:19, 7:19, 8:21, 19:34, 20:12. This setting does not figure in any of the other Qumran texts. Charlesworth, Damascus Document, War Scroll, 7.
depicted as the setting for sectarian textual exegesis of the Instruction (i.e., “the Torah”)\textsuperscript{111}:

They dug the well: “The well was dug by rulers and bored out by the nobles of the people with a scepter” (Num 21:18). The “well” is the Instruction (תורה) and those who “dig it” are the returnees of Israel, who left the land of Judah and reside in the land of Damascus… the “scepter” is the interpreter of the instruction (דורש תורה)… (CD 6:3-8).

The term, “returnees of Israel” embraces the two-fold nature of sectarian ideology; they “return” to the regulations “discovered” through “digging” scriptural sources. A similar statement appears in the Damascus Document’s exegesis of the “star” mentioned in Amos 5:26:\textsuperscript{112}

The “star” is the interpreter of the Instruction (תורה), who will come to Damascus, as it is written, “A star departs from Jacob, and a scepter arises from Israel” (Num 24:17; CD 7:18-19).

In my reading, the Damascus Document forges a strong association between the sectarian program of religious regulations, including calendrical matters, and practices of textual divination. To my mind, this suggests that the sectarians were innovators in such matters.

Calendrical adherence is also stipulated in the Rule of the Community, which is considered a securely sectarian text at least twelve copies of which have been found at Qumran.\textsuperscript{113} The first column of the Rule of the Community presents a series of ethical and ritual purpose statements (in the infinitive-participial form)\textsuperscript{114} for members, one of which stipulates calendrical adherence: “in order not to depart from any one of all the words of

\textsuperscript{111} I do not employ the English term, “the Torah” because it carries a strong and perhaps anachronistic set of assumptions and connotations.

\textsuperscript{112} MT: “You will take up Sakkuth, your king, and Kewan, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves” (Amos 5:26).


\textsuperscript{114} Charlesworth, Rule of the Community, 7.
God in their times (בprotect) and in order not to be early in their times (לadvanced), and in order not to be late in any of their appointed times (לadvanced early). While this passage does not provide much in the way of specific detail, it seems likely that “their times” and “their appointed times” refer to Sabbaths, festivals, and New Moons, which are to be observed neither too early nor too late. This may be a reference to following the lunar calendar in opposition to the solar calendar.

In addition to such calendrical accusations, at least five texts evidenced at Qumran allege that the Jerusalem Temple and the sacrifices offered therein have been defiled or are otherwise liable to defilement or profanation on account of some aspect of the Temple’s priestly governance, namely the Enochic Animal Vision, 4QMMT, the Damascus Document, and Pseudo-Moses, the relevant passage from which I have already discussed above (“As for my temple they will defile it,” [4Q390 frag. 2 i: 9-10]).

The Animal Vision, which was later incorporated into 1Enoch (chapters 85-90), contains a brief, allegorical description of the building, destruction, and rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple with the significant detail that after the Temple’s rebuilding its altar became polluted. Four fragmentary Aramaic manuscripts of the Animal Vision have been

115 1QS 1:14-15.
116 Vanderkam, Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 46, “the law is that they are not to be celebrated either too early or too late but at precisely the time God commanded them... a statement about advancing or delaying festivals probably points to... different calendars.” “Calendrical assertions in a work such as the Rule of the Community should bear special weight because the text appears to have served as a sort of constitution or basic rule for the group that copied and kept the Dead Sea Scrolls” [45].
117 I treat only those texts in which the allegation is relatively clear and straightforward. The Qumran texts contain a vast quantity of legal material pertaining to the Temple and priesthood, which scholars believe did not conform with the practices of the Temple and hence is polemical to some degree. I agree with this conclusion, though our relative dearth of knowledge about the Temple’s practices renders it somewhat hypothetical. For a recent collection of essays pertaining to “sectarian halakha” and its relation to the contemporary Temple, see, Schiffman, Qumran and Jerusalem.
discovered at Qumran (4QEn\textsuperscript{a,b,c,d,e,f}). Like Jubilees, however, complete manuscripts of the text have survived only in relatively late Ethiopic translations.\textsuperscript{119} George Nickelsburg, the author of a recent commentary on \textit{1 Enoch}, dates the composition of the \textit{Animal Vision} to “163 B.C.E. or shortly thereafter” on the basis of an apparent reference to the Maccabean wars (1Enoch 90:9-16).\textsuperscript{120} Like the other apocalyptic texts treated so far, Nickelsburg attributes the authorship of the \textit{Animal Vision} to the religious forebears of the Qumran sectarians: “At the very least… the Qumran Community… had spiritual ancestors in the group responsible for the composition of the \textit{Animal Vision.”}\textsuperscript{121}

The \textit{Animal Vision}’s account of the Temple’s initial construction under Solomon specifies that the Lord (i.e., Yahweh) was present in the Temple, and the text presents no problem or issue with the provision of sacrificial food to the Lord on the altar:

> And a little sheep [i.e., Solomon]\textsuperscript{122} became a ram instead of it [i.e., David], and it became ruler and leader of those sheep [i.e., the Israelites]. And that house [i.e., Jerusalem] became large and broad. And a large and high tower [i.e., the Temple] was built upon that house for the Lord of the sheep. That house was low, but the tower was raised up and was high. And the Lord of the sheep stood upon that tower, and they spread a full table before him (Enoch 89:48-50).\textsuperscript{123}

Almost immediately after the construction of the Temple and the inaugural sacrifices, however, the Israelite-sheep “went astray in everything, and their eyes were blinded… [so that] he [the Lord] abandoned that house of theirs and their tower...” (89:54-56).

Following an exilic period in which the Israelites are abandoned “into the hands of all the

\textsuperscript{118} George E. Nickelsburg, \textit{1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108} (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 363.
\textsuperscript{119} Nickelsburg, \textit{1 Enoch 1}, 18-21.
\textsuperscript{120} Nickelsburg, \textit{1 Enoch 1}, 361.
\textsuperscript{121} Nickelsburg, \textit{1 Enoch 1}, 363.
\textsuperscript{122} For these identifications, see, Nickelsburg, \textit{1 Enoch 1}, 383-4.
\textsuperscript{123} Trans. Nickelsburg, \textit{1 Enoch 1}, 366-367. Nickelsburg employs the Ethiopic text.
beasts as fodder” (89:58), some return and rebuild the Temple, but the rebuilt Temple differs from its predecessor in several important respects:

> And behold, three of those sheep [i.e., Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and Sheshbazzar] returned and came and entered and began to build all that had fallen down from that house. And the wild boars [i.e., Edomites] tried to hinder them, but they could not. And they began again to build as before and they raised up that tower [i.e., the Temple] and it was called the high tower. And they began again to place a table before the tower, but all the bread on it was polluted and not pure (Enoch 89:72-73).

This passage undermines the status of the Second Temple and its sacrificial cult in several ways. The phrase, “it was called the high tower” may imply that the Second Temple is a Temple in name only, in contrast to the First Temple (“a large high tower”). Moreover, the absence of the phrase, “the Lord stood upon that tower” suggests that the Lord’s presence does not reside in the Second Temple as it did in the First. The assertion that the sacrifices offered on the altar of the Second Temple have been defiled strengthens this interpretation. To my mind it is significant that the Animal Vision, like Pseudo-Moses, traces the defilement of the Second Temple to the period immediately after its inauguration—some two-hundred years before the dating of the composition of the text—rather than to relatively recent events such as the Hasmonean appropriation of the high-priesthood.

The fragmentary text known to scholars as 4QMiqṣat Ma‘ase ha-Torah (“Some Matters of the Instruction;” hereafter: MMT) alleges that certain norms of the contemporary Jerusalem Temple priesthood are resulting in the defilement of the Temple and the Temple’s sacrificial offerings. Six highly fragmentary manuscripts of the text

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124 The identity of the three sheep is somewhat unclear. Nickelsburg, I Enoch 1, 394.
126 Nickelsburg, I Enoch 1, 394.
127 Nickelsburg, I Enoch 1, 394, observes, “The author asserts that from its inception the cult of the Second Temple did not follow correct laws of ritual purity.”
were discovered at Qumran cave IV (4Q394-399) on the basis of which Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell have produced a composite edition of the text with notes and commentary.\textsuperscript{128} Qimron and Strugnell date the text to the early phase of the sectarian community at Qumran: “MMT is a group composition, originating in the Qumran group, or in one of its antecedents, probably between 159-152 B.C.E.” Subsequent scholars have generally accepted this dating,\textsuperscript{129} though numerous interpretive challenges persist pertaining to the text’s purpose, genre, addressee, and other issues.\textsuperscript{130} According to Qimron and Strugnell, MMT consists of three sections: an exposition of a 364-day solar calendar (A), a series of legal rulings on matters pertaining to the Temple cult and the priesthood (B), and an admonition to the addressee of the letter to adopt the positions set forth in the text (C). The two allegations against the priesthood that I shall consider occur among the religious rulings of section B. The first pertains to people who are blind or deaf:

Concerning the blind, who do not see so as to be aware of every intermingling, they do not see an erroneous intermingling.\textsuperscript{131} Concerning the deaf who have not heard rules, judgments, and purity regulations, and they have not heard the judgments of Israel. Because he has not seen and he has not heard he does not know how to act. But they come to the pure [food] of the Temple (B49-54).

\textsuperscript{128} Elisha Qimron, John Strugnell, et al., \textit{Qumran Cave 4: V Miqṣat Ma ʿase ha-Torah} (Discoveries in the Judean Desert 10; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). I employ their composite Hebrew text for my translations.

\textsuperscript{129} Lawrence H. Schiffman, \textit{Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran} (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994) 89; Timothy Wardle, \textit{The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity} (WUzNT 2.291; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 67.


\textsuperscript{131} Or: “an intermingling that warrants a penalty sacrifice.”
The allegation here appears to be that blind and deaf people—perhaps priests—currently have access to the sacrificial offerings at the Jerusalem Temple even though their disabilities might render them incompetent with regard to purity practices.\(^{132}\) It is noteworthy that this ruling does not appeal to scriptural or revelatory authority, but rather to practical argumentation. A similar logic obtains in the following passage, which prohibits the presence of dogs in Jerusalem: “One must not bring dogs into the holy camp, because they eat (אוכלים) some of the bones of the Temple and the meat upon them” (B58-9). Dogs are liable to eat the bones of Temple sacrifices, probably after their disposal, which, in the author’s view, results in the defilement or profanation (or both) of the offerings—a serious allegation against the priesthood. There is no biblical basis for this regulation, and no other witness mentions any problem with dogs in Jerusalem.\(^{133}\) To my mind it seems unlikely that the Hasmoneans introduced dogs into Jerusalem; this regulation appears to be an innovation, perhaps based on observation.

*Pesher Habakkuk* (1QpHab) alleges that the “Wicked Priest” defiled the Temple, among his numerous offenses:

Where he says, “On account a city’s blood and a land’s violence” (Hab 2:17), its interpretation: the city is Jerusalem, where the Wicked Priest committed abominable acts (מעשי תועבות) and defiled the temple of God (אלוהי מקדש א); “a land’s violence,” they are the cities of Judah, where he robbed the wealth (הון) of the poor (1QpHab 12:6-10).

It is not my purpose here to attempt to identify the Wicked Priest as one of the high-priests known from Josephus, a task that has already been taken up in numerous publications. The text does not explain how the Wicked Priest defiled the Temple, nor


\(^{133}\) Qimron and Strugnell, *Miqṣat Maʿase ha-Torah*, 163.
does it dwell on this issue. A previous passage in the text reports that the Wicked Priest committed abominable acts but does not connect these with the Temple:

[The Wicked Priest] robbed and gathered the wealth of the men of violence who had rebelled against God. He took the wealth of peoples, thereby compounding his offensive culpability. He acted in abominable ways by every defiling impurity (1QpHab 8:11-13).

It is important to note that the text does not accuse the wicked priest of having introduced an incorrect calendar or incorrect purity regulations; the overriding concern appears to be ethical violations and the accrual of wealth.

The Damascus Document alleges that the Jerusalem Temple has been defiled and associates the defilement with lack of attention to issues of ritual purity:

They (הם) also defile (מטמאים) the Temple (המקדש) because they do not separate [pure from impure] in accordance with the Instruction (כתורה), and they sleep with a woman who sees a menstrual flow, and each one marries his brother’s daughter or his sister’s daughter (CD 5:7-8).

It is unclear whether the second and third accusations support the first or stand alone; I am inclined to read them as separate accusations.134 At any rate, the upshot of the first accusation is clear: negligence in matters of ritual purity has resulted in the defilement of the Temple. A preceding verse describes the “defilement of the Temple” (תמא ממקדש) as one of “the three nets of Belial… with which he trapped Israel” (CD 4:15-16), thus associating this outcome with demonic agency. Again, there is no allegation that the Temple priesthood or the Hasmoneans have introduced innovative practices resulting in this defilement.

A further and well-known passage in the Damascus Document warns members of the New Covenant against entering the Jerusalem Temple to offer sacrifices:

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134 Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 86, reads the three allegations together.
All those who have been brought into the Covenant shall not enter the Temple (המקדש) to kindle his altar in vain, but rather they are to be closers of the door, of whom God said, “Who among you will close the door [of the Temple] and not kindle my altar in vain?” (Mal 1:10), unless (לא אם) they take care to act in accordance with the explication of the Instruction in the time of evil, and to separate from the sons of the pit, and to abstain from the impure (יהטמא), evil wealth of vows and dedications, and the wealth of the Temple, and robbing (ולגזול) the poor of his people so that the widows become their prey, and they [the sons of the pit]135 murder orphans (CD 6:11-18).

The Damascus Document’s adoption of the prophetic rhetoric of the book of Malachi is significant. The first chapter of Malachi depicts Yahweh refusing the Israelites’ defective tribute (מנחה), which so enrages him that he yearns for someone to close the door of his Temple and suspend the sacrificial cult. The argument is not that one should abstain from offering sacrifices on principle, but rather that one should not offer sacrifices that are unacceptable and offensive to Yahweh.136 Whereas in Malachi the reason for Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices is relatively straightforward—the animals are sick, lame, and have been obtained through inappropriate means (Mal 1:13)—the Damascus Document does not provide such details. One might infer that this position is premised upon the defilement of the Temple, the Temple’s adherence to an incorrect calendar, and/or the charges raised in the second section of the passage above.137 The relation of this section of the passage to the first poses interpretive challenges on the basis of a grammatical ambiguity. The translation I have provided reads the Hebrew phrase, ‘im lō’ as “unless;” in which case the second section supplies the conditions under which one might properly kindle Yahweh’s altar: adherence to sectarian religious ideology and avoidance of the sons of the pit—perhaps the current priestly administration—and the illicit, ill-gotten

135 Charlesworth, Damascus Document, War Scroll, 23.
136 Schiffman, Qumran and Jerusalem, 86, “Temple sacrifice according to the prevailing norms was considered explicitly by this text to be null and void.”
137 Schiffman, Qumran and Jerusalem, 86, “This strong judgment was, no doubt, based on the many halakhic disagreements between the sectarians and the priestly establishment.”
wealth of the Temple.\textsuperscript{138} How one might enter the Temple and offer sacrifices while avoiding these is not specified. It is also possible to read ‘im lō’ as independent particles, “if” and “not,” in which case the second section begins an independent, somewhat incoherent rhetorical unit: “If they do not take care to act in accordance with the explication of the instruction… they murder orphans.” However one reads the transition to the second section of the passage, it is clear that it raises an allegation against the current administration of the Temple: the wealth and votive offerings of the Temple have been acquired through illicit means and are defiling.

The Damascus Document contains another exegetical passage that prohibits offering sacrifices in certain circumstances:

Let no one send an ascending offering, or tribute, or incense, or wood to the altar by means of a man defiled (טמא) by any of the impurities (הטמאות), enabling him to defile (לטמא) the altar, for it is written: “the sacrifice (זבח) of the wicked is an abomination (תועבה) but the prayer of the upright is like acceptable tribute (רצונו כמנחת)” (Prov 15:8;\textsuperscript{139} CD 11:17-21).

This regulation is not “sectarian” in any strict sense; most ancient people, Judean or otherwise, would likely have agreed that defiled priests should not officiate at a god’s altar, rendering the altar liable to defilement. In light of the passage quoted above (CD 5:7-8), which implies that the priests are already exposing the altar to defilement (“they are defiling the Temple”), this passage might be read as prohibiting the offering of sacrifices altogether given the current conditions. The scriptural citation adds force to this interpretation, as it contrasts an abominable sacrifice with prayer that is like “acceptable

\textsuperscript{138} Cf. 1QpHab 8:11-12, 12:10.

\textsuperscript{139} MT does not mention tribute: “… the prayer of the upright is his delight (רצונו).”
tribute.” This implies that prayers might be an appropriate substitute when the offering of acceptable sacrifices is impossible, a topic that I will return to below.  

Above I have shown that two concrete and conspicuous allegations against the priestly leadership of the Jerusalem Temple appear in various texts evidenced at Qumran, including texts considered relatively early (i.e., the Animal Vision, Jubilees, Pseudo-Moses) and relatively late (4QMMT, the Damascus Document). Scholars have proposed that one or the other of these issues lead to the “schism” that resulted in the sectarian movement evidenced in the Damascus Document and the Rule of the Community. James Vanderkam, for example, points to calendrical differences:

Did the calendar have a part in the events that led to the separation of the Qumran covenaners from their Jewish contemporaries? ... there is a series of hints in the sources that suggest a role for the calendar in the disputes that led to the final rupture.

Several of the texts found at Qumran are insistent that all Israel has gone astray with respect to the festivals, God’s sacred times. There is reason to believe that a calendar dispute lies behind such sentiments, and that the Qumran covenaners were convinced that their calendar had ancient, scriptural support… It may be that a conservative priest like the Teacher [of Righteousness], whose powerful claims about himself and his positions as they come to expression in the Hodayot make one think that he had once held high rank although did so only now in his community, tried to (re)introduce the 364-day solar calendar into the temple cult after the immediate Seleucid threat had been removed… This may have been the occasion that caused the Teacher to lead his followers into exile where they could practice their religion using the calendar that God had revealed and that they alone understood.

I do not find this reconstruction entirely satisfactory. There is no clear evidence for an initial, irenic phase during which the “covenaners” enjoyed relatively positive relations with the Temple administrators, nor is there any clear evidence for some manner of “final rupture” that brought this phase to an end. There is also no clear evidence that supports

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140 Cf. 1QS 9:3-5.
141 Vanderkam, Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 113.
142 Vanderkam, Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 116.
the possibility that the sectarian movement was born in “conservative” or traditionalist opposition to a calendrical innovation introduced in the Hasmonean period. None of our texts makes this claim as we would expect if this were the case. *Jubilees* and *Pseudo-Moses* depict the Israelites’ adoption of an incorrect calendar in the remote past, not the immediate present. That some sectarian texts make “powerful claims” about the Teacher of Righteousness does not indicate that he or some other early sectarian leader once held a position of authority at the Temple; indeed, this claim is never raised in any of our texts.

Lawrence Schiffman has proposed a similar historical reconstruction, though in his version exegetical debates about the details of Jewish law take prominence.  

Remnants of the pious Sadducean priests—those who had completely eschewed illegitimate worship at all costs—found it necessary finally to withdraw from participation in the Jerusalem temple because of the changeover from Sadducean practices to those in accord with the Pharisaic point of view... It is our view, therefore, that the initial schism that caused the creation of what we know as the Qumran sect resulted from specific disagreements about details of Jewish law, themselves based for the most part on details of biblical exegesis.

It is not my purpose to take up the thorny question of whether the Qumran sectarians followed Sadducean law, an issue that has an extensive bibliography. What is of importance here is that Schiffman posits that those who were to become the Qumran sectarians withdrew from the Temple on the basis of a dispute over recent changes to the Temple’s ritual practices. Like Vanderkam, Schiffman embraces one element of sectarian

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143 Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 85, also notes the role of calendrical differences: “[in the view of a copyist of MMT] the founding of the sect was at least in part based on the controversy surrounding the calendar. If this is correct, then the sectarian separation from the Jerusalem temple would have been encouraged, if not caused by, disagreement regarding the dates of the festivals. This same claim is made, after all, in the *Zadokite Fragments* (*Damascus Document*) and can be supported by *Pesher Habakkuk*.”

144 Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 82.

145 See the essays and bibliography in, Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*. 
discourse in depicting the early sectarians as pious traditionalists who held fast to their exegetically based ritual law in the face of a recent change to the Temple’s governance involving the Hasmonean appropriation of the high-priesthood. This reconstruction is undermined by a similar dearth of evidence. None of our texts mentions a change in the governance of the Temple or claims that the leaders of the sect ever held some position of authority at the Temple. In my view, silence on these matters ought to be taken seriously. Moreover, to my mind the twofold nature of these allegations—which obtains even in texts considered very early—suggests that the dispute with the priesthood was not an unintended consequence. As I mention above, the first allegation relies upon astronomical reasoning whereas the second is based upon stringent and harmonizing exegesis of biblical texts. Scholars have suggested that the controversy with the priesthood originated in either of these two matters, yet they rarely consider the fact that both kinds of allegations run through most of the significant texts of the DSS corpus.146

The final matter that I will consider in this chapter is the question of whether the sectarian programs of religious and ethical practices evidenced especially in the Rule of the Community and the Damascus Document functioned as some manner of replacement or substitute for offering sacrifices at the Jerusalem temple. The following, well-known passage from the Rule of the Community provides the principal evidence on this issue:

When these [i.e., the holy Community (קודש יחד)] become in Israel a foundation of holy spirit in eternal truth, in accordance with all these rules, they will expiate (לכפר) culpable rebellion and offensive sacrilege and for the acceptance (רצה) of

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146 As mentioned above, Klawans, Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple, observes the multiform nature of the accusations, though he believes purity disputes are preeminent: “The criticisms leveled against the Temple, its practices, and its personnel are numerous and apparently operated on a number of distinct levels simultaneously” [147]. “There is also no evidence to the effect that calendar disputes led directly to any accusation that the temple was defiled, whether ritually or morally” [157]. “As if adding insult to injury, once the temple was considered morally or ritually defiled, it could easily stand accused of a host of other lesser transgressions” [158].
the land, without the flesh of ascending offerings (מעשר עולות) or the fat of a slain offering (המחלב וצמר). Rather, the offering of lips (שפתים תרומה) in judgment shall be meritorious like [something] pleasing (コンテン ניחוח), and perfection in conduct shall be as a voluntary offering of acceptable tribute (מן נחת נדבה). At that time the men of the community shall separate [as] a holy house of Aaron, as a most holy community, and as a house of the community of Israel—the ones who walk in perfection.\(^{147}\)

Much of the terminology above has been adapted from the Priestly lexicon for the sacrificial cult. Perfect adherence to the religious, social, and ethical norms set forth in the \textit{Rule of the Community} (and presumably other sectarian documents) is likened to several types of sacrificial offerings that are dealt with in Priestly biblical texts (מנחה “tribute,” נדבה “voluntary offering,” הורפה “raised offering, contribution”).\(^{148}\) Moreover, such adherence is also said to achieve expiation (כפור), acceptance (רצה), and God’s pleasure (ניחוח), which effects are said to result from offering various sacrifices in Priestly texts. A preceding passage in the \textit{Rule of the Community} (1QS 8:5-9) similarly asserts, “the council of the Community (היחד עצה)… has been chosen by favor to atone for the land (לأخرוב רוח ניחוח)… to offer a pleasing aroma (לכפרי ניחוח).”

Terminology associated with the sacrificial cult also appears in the \textit{Rule of the Community}’s description of the initiation of new members:

[I]t is by the spirit of the true counsel of God that the ways of man—all his iniquities—are expiated (כפרין) in order that he might see the light of life. It is by the holy spirit of the Community in his truth that he is purified (רצה) from all his iniquities. It is by an upright and humble spirit that his offense might be expiated (כפר). It is by humbling his soul to all God’s statutes that his flesh is purified, sprinkling with purifying waters, sanctifying with cleansing waters. May he establish his steps to walk perfectly in all the ways of God, as he commanded for the appointed times of his testimonies, turning neither to the right nor to the left, not transgressing a single one of his words, then he will be accepted by pleasing expiation (כפרי ניחוח) in the presence of God (לפני אל) and it shall become for him a covenant of the eternal Community (1QS 3:6-12).

\(^{147}\) 1QS 9:3-6.

\(^{148}\) 1QS 10:6 also mentions “offering of the lips” (שפתים תרומה).
Purification and initiation into the Community of those who walk in perfect holiness results in the pleasing expiation of the new member’s offenses and iniquities “in the presence of God.” This latter phrase is an adaption of a common cultic idiom, “in the presence of Yahweh” (e.g., Lev 1:3, 5, 11). The phrase, “accepted by pleasing expiation” is unattested, but combines elements of two cultic idioms: “pleasing aroma for Yahweh” (e.g., Lev 1:9, 13, 17) and, “it shall be accepted for him to effect expiation on his behalf” (Lev 1:3).

On the basis of these passages, several scholars have suggested that the sectarians, having found themselves alienated from the Jerusalem Temple after the “schism,” improvised a set of religious practices in order to attempt to achieve the kind of atonement formerly obtained by means of the sacrificial cult of the Jerusalem Temple. Lawrence Schiffman, for example, has argued, “it is the life of the [sectarian] community within the context of the group that provides the opportunity for atonement, which would have been the function of the various sacrifices had the sectarians participated in temple rituals in Jerusalem.”

Eyal Regev has written, “Here [1QS 9:3-5] justice and righteous behavior (together with prayer) atone for sin and treachery as substitutes for the corrupt sacrifices in the Temple.”

Jonathan Klawans has expanded this position, arguing that the sectarians viewed their religious program as an inadequate substitute for participation in temple rituals.

149 Schiffman, Qumran and Jerusalem, 88. Schiffman continues, “the Qumran sect were separated [from the Jerusalem temple] because of their disapproval of the manner in which the Jerusalem priesthood conducted temple worship. Further, if the sectarian calendar was indeed practiced, it would have served as an additional factor distancing the Dead Sea sectarians from the Jerusalem temple... The sectarians saw their group as a virtual temple in which, through purity regulations, prayer, and apparently, though study of God's law it was possible to achieve the spiritual connection with the divine that had been vouchsafed to Israel in God's central sanctuary according to the Bible” (97).

in the Temple cult: “the sectarians saw their community as a provisional replacement for a temple, even though their provisional replacement fails by comparison to the Temple itself… the community offers limited access to the divine presence and relatively inadequate means of atonement.” In my view, several factors render this explanatory approach unconvincing. The statement that the Community will achieve expiation “without the flesh of ascending offerings or the fat of a slain offering” draws an associative link to the sacrificial cult; it does not articulate the idea that such expiation is a precise substitute for the same kind of expiation available at the Jerusalem Temple. Furthermore, the kind of expiation offered in the Rule of the Community is incommensurate with Priestly discourse on the efficacy of sacrifices. Various passages in Leviticus state that expiatory sacrifices might wipe away “unintentional” (בָּשֶׁגֶה) violations of religious regulations and certain misappropriations of Yahweh’s sancta, but never the kind of “culpable rebellion” mentioned above and elsewhere in the Rule of the Community. Moreover, no text in the Priestly or Holiness corpora ever claims that sacrifices might achieve expiation or “acceptance” (רָצָן) for the land. To the contrary, according to Lev 18:25-28 the land will “vomit” (תקיא) its inhabitants into exile should they defile it by committing any of the serious offenses enumerated earlier in the chapter; sacrifice offers no remedy. In my reading, the kind of expiation proffered in the Rule of the Community was not available through offering sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple.

Klawans, Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple, 168. In Klawans’ view, the fact that prayers for atonement and penal regulations occur in Qumran texts indicates, “the sectarians did not believe they had the power to effect atonement, at least not in a very expeditious manner, which is what one would expect from a temple” (168). I find this argument unconvincing.

Neither Josephus nor Philo nor any author ancient author claims that expiation from “culpable rebellion” might be achieved through offering a sacrifice.

A conceptual affinity might be found in Jub. 6:1-4, treated above, where Noah “atoned with the blood [of the sacrifice] for all the sins of the land.”
Hence, I would suggest that we view the text’s expiatory program as an innovation rather than as a simple substitute for participation in the sacrificial cult.

In this chapter I have pursued three discrete but interrelated arguments. First, I argued that none of the “non-biblical” texts evidenced at Qumran criticizes the practice of sacrifice in any way whatsoever. To the contrary, several texts contain depictions of exemplary figures offering sacrifices in reciprocal contexts, thus furnishing support for the gift theorization of sacrifice pursued in the earlier chapters of this study. This material also undermines the scholarly position that a transition from sacrifice to prayer was already underway in the Second Temple period. Several texts do allege that the Jerusalem Temple has been defiled and the correct calendar has been forgotten, which implies that the sacrifices offered there are unacceptable to God. In contrast to those scholars who read these allegations as a conservative reaction to Hasmonean innovations, for which there is little evidence, I suggested that we view them rather as sectarian innovations whose purpose is to delegitimate the Jerusalem Temple priesthood. Finally, I argued that the expiatory program of the Rule of the Community should be viewed as a sectarian innovation rather than as a mere replacement for participation in the sacrificial cult. I return to some of these issues in chapter seven.
CHAPTER SIX
Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and “Sin” in the Pauline Epistles

In this chapter I consider material pertaining to sacrifice that appears in the undisputed Pauline epistles.¹ Of all the extant writings associated with the emergence of earliest Christianity, these texts are of particular relevance to the present study because scholars typically date them to a period during which the Herodian Jerusalem Temple was a prominent and well-known religious site in the Greco-Roman East.² I pursue two related arguments. First, I show that several passages in the letters recapitulate biblical phrases expressing the reciprocal efficacy of sacrifices as they portray adherence to Paul’s ethical-religious instructions and monetary gifts to himself and the “holy ones” in Jerusalem as sacrifices that are acceptable and pleasing to God. Other passages in the letters dealing with donations and obedience that do not explicitly liken these practices to sacrifices nevertheless corroborate their reciprocal aspect, asserting that God rewards donations generously and that proper conduct is pleasing and acceptable to God. This material thus associates the offering of sacrifices with religious practices that Paul explicitly ties to human-divine reciprocal exchange. This conclusion lends support to the reciprocal theorization of sacrifice pursued in the previous chapters of this study, albeit in a somewhat indirect manner.

¹ In my view, the issues of so-called “idol meat” (1 Cor 8) and “partnership in the altar” (1 Cor 10) have been satisfactorily addressed by Daniel C. Ullucci, The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 70-74, and will not be addressed here.
In the second section of this chapter, I take up the question of whether the Pauline epistles articulate a sacrificial theology of Jesus’ death based in large measure on biblical ideas about sacrifice and atonement, as numerous scholars of early Christianity have asserted.\(^3\) According to this line of reasoning, several passages in the Pauline epistles portray Jesus’ death as a “sin offering” or “sin sacrifice” (Heb. חטאת) in broad accordance with biblical instructions for offering such sacrifices in the Septuagint versions of Leviticus and Numbers.\(^4\) I will argue that this position is premised upon problematic readings of both the Pauline and the Septuagintal evidence and, to the contrary, Paul does not portray Jesus as a sin-sacrifice in any discernable manner in any of the extant letters. In addition, I will argue that many of the portrayals of the Judean sacrificial cult that underlie scholarly elaborations of the “sin offering” hypothesis are dubious. There is sometimes a tendency among scholars of early Christianity to portray the sacrificial cult of the Jerusalem Temple and cultic biblical texts as oriented primarily toward the provision of atonement from moral sins by means of the vicarious punishment of substitutionary animals. I shall argue that this approach has no secure basis in biblical or other Judean discourse on sacrifices and, moreover, that it anticipates distinctly post-Pauline Christian religious practices and theological doctrines.

The reciprocal aspect of the religious practices that the undisputed Pauline epistles liken to sacrifices has not received the manner of sustained scholarly theorization that have other elements of Paul’s religious program pertaining to matters such as sin and death, participation in Christ, and the status of Israel. For example, James D. G. Dunn’s

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\(^3\) E.g., Stephen Finlan, *The Background and Content of Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors* (Academia Biblica 19; Leiden, Brill, 2004), 4, “Paul probably did not initiate the sacrificial interpretation of the death of Christ, but he did formulate a sacrificial theology.”

\(^4\) I do not presume a fixed text of the Septuagint in the first century. My purpose is to show that the claims that scholars are making about our text of the Septuagint are problematic.
only once in a brief footnote and does not mention that the passage refers to Paul’s gift from the Philippians as “a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God (ὀσμήν εὖωδίας θυσίαν δεκτήν εὔφραστον τῷ θεῷ).”\(^5\) Indeed, Dunn does not comment upon the particular verse in which this statement occurs at all (Phil 4:18).\(^6\) In my view, this state of affairs likely results from the scholarly and theological axiom that the Pauline epistles articulate a religiosity that emphasizes faith at the extreme expense of the works.\(^7\) The evidence that I marshal below in the first section of this chapter calls this bifurcation into question; there are many instances in which certain practices that Paul promotes and endorses and that are not easily subsumed under the category of “faith” or “belief” are said to bring about profound and tangible rewards from God.

I begin my treatment of the evidence with the passage mentioned immediately above, Phil 4:10-20, in which Paul thanks the Philippians for his receipt of their monetary gift—the third such gift that he has received from them—and comments upon its religious efficacy: \(^8\)

\((v.10)\) I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that you have now revived your concern for me, which you were intent upon though lacking in opportunity. \((v.11)\) It is not that I am speaking to you due to lack, for I learned to be self sufficient \((αὐτόχης)\) wherever I happen to be. \((v.12)\) I know how to be humbled, and I know how to abound. I have been initiated in all things and everything, to feast and to hunger, to abound and to be humbled. \((v.13)\) I am strong in everything in which he [i.e., God] strengthens me. \((v.14)\) You did well, though, by sharing in my affliction. \((v.15)\) You yourselves know, Philippians, that at the beginning of the glad tidings, \((v.16)\) when I departed from Macedonia, no assembly shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving \((εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως)\)

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\(^{5}\) This and all other translations in this chapter are my own. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 796, 583n94.

\(^{6}\) Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 796.

\(^{7}\) See, for example, Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 334-389.

\(^{8}\) For commentary on this passage, see John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Yale Bible 33B; New Haven: Yale, 2008), 646-726.
except you only; that even in Thessalonica not once but twice you sent [gifts] for my needs (εἰς τὴν χρείαν μου). (v.17) It is not that I am seeking a gift (τὸ δόμα), but rather that I seek the profit that increases to your account (τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν). (v.18) I have received everything and I abound, I have been replenished, having received from Epaphroditus the things you sent, a fragrant aroma (ὀσμῆν εὐωδίας), an acceptable sacrifice (θυσίαν δεκτήν), pleasing to God (εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ). (v.19) My God will fulfill your every need according to his riches in glory in Jesus Christ. (v.20) To our God and our Father is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul equivocates on the topic of the gifts of the Philippians. Paul first mentions that he is pleased that the Philippians have revived their concern for him in sending their gift (of money), but then proceeds to disavow any real need for the gift in a manner that emphasizes his self-sufficiency, piety, and, ultimately, his disinterest. The next section mentions that Paul has received two such gifts from the Philippians previously in order to meet his needs in Thessalonica. This is followed by a reassertion of Paul’s lack of interest in the gift; Paul states that his only motive in soliciting the gift is that God will credit the gift to the account of the Philippians to their profit. This acknowledgment of the gift without any clear expression of gratitude has led commentators to refer to the content of 4:10-20 as “thankless thanks.” The final section of the passage elaborates on what profit the gift entails: God will repay the gift by fulfilling the needs of the Philippians.

Verse 18 of the passage elucidates how and why God will credit the gift to the account of the Philippians: the gift is a “fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God.” The phrase, “fragrant aroma” (ὀσμῆν εὐωδίας; Heb. ניחוח ריח) is a standard Septuagintal formula for expressing the Lord’s (i.e., Yahweh’s) pleasure at receiving his

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9 Reumann, Philippians, 676; David J. Downs, The Offering of the Gentiles (WUZNT 2.248; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 55.
10 For a selection of Greek philosophical texts that treat self-sufficiency as a virtue, see Reumann, Philippians, 652.
11 Reumann, Philippians, 685-690.
portion of an animal or grain sacrifice by way of its incineration on an altar. The phrase, “an acceptable sacrifice” (θυσίαν δέξιτήν) employs a basic Greek noun for sacrifice in conjunction with an adjective that derives from the verb, “receive” (δέχομαι). This formulation emphasizes the reciprocal aspect of the sacrifice: it is acceptable; therefore, God may receive it. The phrase, “pleasing to God” (εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ) makes explicit the notion that God takes pleasure in his receipt of the sacrifice/Paul’s receipt of the gift.

The upshot of verses 18 and 19 is that the gift of the Philippians to Paul is equivalent in function to an acceptable and pleasing sacrifice that has been offered to God (v.18); its favorable receipt entails divine recompense (v.19). Paul’s statements here accord with the reciprocal understandings and assumptions about the practice of sacrifice that I have adduced from the Judean (and non-Judean) materials treated in the previous chapters of the present study. Moreover, these statements articulate a model of human divine exchange that is thoroughly reciprocal, a fact that has troubled some commentators. John Reumann, for example, poses the question, “Is such a do-ut-des concept (I’ll do this so that you’ll do that for me) unworthy of Paul’s theology?”

While Phil 4:18 is the only verse in the Pauline epistles that describes gifts to Paul as acceptable sacrifices to God, Rom 15:15-16 employs similar sacrificial terminology in its description of the “offering of the Gentiles”:

I write to you more boldly, in part to remind you on account of the favor given to me by God to be a minister (λειτουργῶν) of Jesus Christ to the nations, performing the sacred work of the glad tidings of God (ἱερουργνύοντα τῷ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ), in order that the offering (ἡ προσφορά) of the Gentiles

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12 E.g., Gen 8:21, Lev 1:9, 13, 17 (whole-burnt sacrifices); 2:2, 9, 12 (sacrifices of grain); 3:5, 11, 16 (sacrifices of deliverance); 4:31 (error/sin sacrifices).
might be acceptable (εὐπρόσδεκτος), sanctified (ἡγιασμένη) in holy spirit.

Cultic terminology abounds throughout the passage.\(^\text{15}\) The noun, “minister” (λειτουργός) may refer to a public servant that carries out either non-religious duties (e.g., LXX 3Kgs 10:5) or religious duties such as the offering of public sacrifices (e.g., “ministers of the gods” [λειτουργοὺς τῶν θεῶν], D.H. 2.22-23). The verb, “perform sacred work” (ἱερουργέω) can refer to the offering of sacrifices, which usage is common in the first century Judean authors Josephus and especially Philo, whose use of the term I have documented in an earlier chapter.\(^\text{16}\) The noun, “offering” (προσφορά; lit. “that which is brought to”) is also employed frequently in Ben Sira to refer to sacrifices offered to God (e.g., 34:18; 35:1; 38:11). The adjective, “acceptable” (εὐπρόσδεκτος; lit. “well-acceptable-to”) indicates that the offering is involved in a reciprocal exchange with God the likely recipient. While the latter idea is not stated explicitly, it is suggested inasmuch as something “sanctified” properly belongs to God. In my reading, then, this passage portrays Paul as working in the capacity of a priest who will convey the “offering of the Gentiles” to God in the manner of a priest.

There are two possible readings of the phrase, “the offering of the Gentiles.” Most scholars interpret the phrase as an appositional objective genitive.\(^\text{17}\) Joseph Fitzmyer, for example, argues, “[the offering] denotes the evangelized Gentiles who are consecrated and offered to God as an acceptable sacrifice through Paul’s evangelization of them.”\(^\text{18}\) Fitzmyer’s reading, while grammatically possible, is premised upon a problematic

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\(^{15}\) Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles*, 154; Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 546.

\(^{16}\) See pages 94-95.


\(^{18}\) Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 712.
understanding of sacrifice:

Because the *finis* of all sacrifice is to bring about in some way the return of sinful human beings to God, Paul looks on his work among the Gentiles as a form of sacrifice, for their conversion has achieved that very purpose. The Apostle to the Gentiles offers to God not slaughtered animals, but repentant human beings, and this is the *proosphora* acceptable to God.  

Fitzmyer’s claim about the purpose of “all sacrifice” has no basis in our ancient evidence for the practice of sacrifice, whether Judean or otherwise. Nevertheless, this fact does not disqualify the objective genitive reading of the passage nor the central place of human-divine reciprocity therein—God might receive the Gentiles in the manner of an acceptable sacrifice. In contrast to Fitzmyer and others, David Downs has recently argued in favor of reading the phrase as a subjective genitive, “the offering given by the Gentiles.” This reading is supported by the fact that Paul discusses Gentile donations explicitly in a later section of the same rhetorical unit (Rom 15:25-26): “I am going to Jerusalem to serve the holy ones (τοῖς ἁγίοις), for Macedonia (i.e., Philippi) and Achaia (i.e., Corinth) were pleased to make some contribution (κοινωνίαν τινὰ) to the poor among the holy ones in Jerusalem.” Paul elaborates the reciprocal logic of these donations in the following verse: “They were pleased to do so; indeed, they are their debtors, for if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual [goods] (τοῖς πνευματικοῖς), do they not owe it to them to serve them with fleshly [goods] (ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς)?” (Rom 15:27) The reciprocal logic here is Gentile-Judean rather than human-divine: the Gentiles have partaken in the spiritual goods of the holy ones among the Judeans; therefore, they owe it to these Judeans to serve them with fleshly goods, namely money.

Paul elaborates on the logic and efficacy of the donations of the Gentiles within the

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19 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 712.
20 Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles*, 149-156.
conceptual framework of human-divine reciprocal exchange at 2 Cor 9:5-15, which instructs the Corinthian addressees to prepare their gift before Paul’s arrival: 21

(v.5) It was necessary that I take the lead to urge the brothers that they come to you beforehand and prepare your promised blessing (lit. “good-word;”) εὐλογίαν, this being prepared thus as a blessing (εὐλογίαν) and not as a profit (πλεονεξίαν). (v.6) This is [the principle]: the one who sows sparingly reaps sparingly, and the one who sows in blessings (ἐπ’ εὐλογίας) reaps in blessings (ἐπ’ εὐλογίας), (v.7) each one as he chooses beforehand in his heart, not out of grief or necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver (ὑλαρόν γὰρ δότιν ἄγαπα ὁ θεός). (v.8) God is able to make every favor (χάριν) abound for you, so that possessing complete self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκειαν) always in every matter you might possess in abundance for every good work (ἔργον), (v.9) as it is written, “he has dispersed, he has given to the poor, his righteousness lasts forever” (LXX Ps 111:9). (v.10) The one who supplies seed for the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness, [you] will be made wealthy (πλουτιζόμενοι) in every way for everything generous, which effects (κατεργάζεται) gratitude (εὐχαριστίαν) to God through us, because this public ministry (ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης) is not only a replenishment of the needs of the holy ones (τῶν ἁγίων) but also brings about abundance through great gratitude to God (διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστῶν τῷ θεῷ).

Paul has dispatched Titus and two unnamed “brothers” (2 Cor 8:16-24) to the Corinthians to prepare their gifts before Paul’s arrival, apparently in order to avoid the impression that Paul is greedily seeking “profit” or “undue gain” (πλεονεξίαν). 22 Paul then elaborates a model of human-divine reciprocal exchange in the matter of benefaction: a generous giver will be rewarded generously, and a sparing giver will be rewarded sparingly; therefore, the more one gives to Paul’s collection, the more blessings one will

21 For commentary on this passage, see Victor Paul Furnish, II Corinthians (Anchor Bible 32A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 420-453; Downs, The Offering of the Gentiles, 142-146.
22 Furnish, II Corinthians, 439.
reap from God. Paul then modulates his rhetoric, asserting that people should give in accordance with their own thinking on the matter rather than in grudging acceptance of Paul’s rhetorical appeal. The statement, “God loves a cheerful giver” seems to imply that God will be more favorably disposed toward a person that has given cheerfully than toward a person who has given reluctantly or grudgingly. Paul then asserts and reasserts that God is capable of enriching those who make a contribution. They will not only become self-sufficient, they will be capable of pursuing “every good work” in the future. Moreover, the contribution effects gratitude toward God, which disposition is a crucial human responsibility that they owe to God (Rom 1:21). Profound benefits, then, come as a result of donating cheerfully to Paul’s collection.

To my mind, the model of human-divine interaction elaborated in 2 Cor 9:5-15 is thoroughly reciprocal: gifts to Paul’s collection will be favorably rewarded by God. In his commentary to 2 Corinthians, however, Victor Paul Furnish contests this notion:

It is important to notice that the apostle does not think of this as “payment for services rendered.” Elsewhere he specifically contrasts what is received as a divine act of “grace” [charis, χάρις] with what is earned as a reward (Rom 4:4). Furnish draws a contrast between a theological model that treats divine benefits as “payment for services rendered” and one which treats them as benefits “received as a divine act of grace” and asserts that Paul espouses the latter model and not the former. In my view, however, this formulation is reminiscent of later Protestant discourse and has little basis in the Pauline epistles. Rom 4:4-5 states that a person who does no works

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23 Gal 6:6-7 elaborates a similar reciprocal formulation in the matter of instruction: “Let the one instructed in the word share in all good things with the instructor. Do not be deceived; God is not to be mocked, for what a person sows, this he shall reap.” Cf. Prov 22:8 (LXX), the text of which might be corrupted: “One who sows trivial things will harvest bad things, and he [i.e., God] will complete the calamity of his works; God loves a generous and cheerful man, and he [i.e., God] will complete the folly of his works.”

24 Furnish, II Corinthians, 447.
might achieve “justification”—acquittal from God’s judgment—on the basis of his faithfulness; the passage does not comment on the manner of tangible divine rewards that are the topic of 2 Cor 9:5-15.\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, there is no philological basis for the contrast between “favor/grace” and “repayment.” Robert Parker has argued convincingly that there is a strong though oblique association between the Greek concept of “favor/grace” (χάρις) and notions of repayment:

\[\text{[T]he ideas of reciprocity and repayment are associated with } \text{chari- words, but not in a direct semantic way. One gift or act endowed with charis, power to please, will call forth another, which will in turn evoke yet another; but a charis even when given in return for a charis is not in meaning a recompense, however, much it may be so in function.}\textsuperscript{26}\]

Greek sources do not treat human-divine reciprocity as a matter of “payment for services rendered” but rather as an ongoing exchange of pleasing favors\textsuperscript{27} This model of interaction accords with the Pauline evidence treated above and calls the validity of Furnish’s bifurcation into question.

Two passages in the Pauline epistles describe obedience to Paul’s ethical-religious program and temperate comportment with other members of the assemblies as an offering to God. Phil 2:14-17 urges its addressees to adopt blameless conduct and then likens their

\[\text{[T]he one who works the wage is not reckoned as a favor but rather as a debt; to the one who does not work, but is faithful to the one that justifies the impious, the faithfulness of this one is reckoned as justification (εἰς δικαιοσύνην).}\]


\[\text{See also Jon D. Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 14, “A charis was a favour that brought to the recipient delight and pleasure, and there was the expectation that such a favour rendered required a favour bringing delight and pleasure in return. Each of those elements is essential to its meaning…. One may well feel ‘gratitude’ upon receipt of such a favor, and for this reason charis is often translated simply as ‘gratitude’ or ‘thanks,’ but this is a misleading oversimplification of the relationship…. A charis was expected in return for a charis, and, in the religious context, what should be emphasized is the relationship based upon continuous mutual and mutually beneficent exchanges of pleasing favours between a human and a god, not merely the ‘gratitude’ or ‘pleasure’ a human or god may feel for a benefit received.”}\]
“faithfulness” (πίστις) to a sacrifice:\(^{28}\)

(v.14) Do all things without murmuring and debate (v.15) so that you may become blameless and uncontaminated, children of God without blemish (ἄμωμος) in the midst of a crooked and twisted age, in which you are seen as lights in the world, (v.16) holding fast to the word of life, so that I might have something to boast about on the day of Christ, that I did not run the course and grow weary in vain, (v.17) but even though I am poured out as a libation (σπένδομαι) upon the sacrifice (θυσία) and service (λειτουργία) of your faithfulness (πίστεως), I rejoice and rejoice also with all of you; (v.18) in the same manner you also rejoice and rejoice with me.

Paul exhorts his addressees to refrain from debate and contention in order that they might become “blameless,” “uncontaminated,” and “unblemished” (ἄμωμος) “children of God” and “lights to the world.”\(^{29}\) If the Philippians adopt such behavior, Paul will boast about it “on the day of Christ,” likely a reference to the eschaton.\(^{30}\) The adjective, “unblemished” is of particular interest because it is employed in the Septuagint as the standard term to describe the quality of an animal that is physically fit to be offered as a sacrifice to the Lord (e.g., Ex 29:1; Lev 1:3, 10). The final section of the passage takes up the sacrificial image and describes the “faithfulness” of the Philippians as a “sacrifice” and “service,” presumably to God. Both of these latter terms are commonly employed in cultic contexts to refer to the offering of sacrifices in both Judean and non-Judean Greek sources.\(^{31}\)

Paul’s description of the faithfulness of the Philippians as a sacrifice implies that it is an acceptable and pleasing gesture to God. The reciprocal aspect of this formulation has evoked the consternation of some commentators: “Is πιστις [faithfulness] in Paul

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\(^{28}\) On this passage, see Reumann, *Philippians*, 384-418.

\(^{29}\) Rom 14:16-18 similarly describes “righteousness and peace and joy” as “pleasing to God” in contrast to contentiousness in the matter of food and drink: “Do not let your good be slandered, for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but rather righteousness and peace and joy in the holy spirit, for the one who serves Christ in this manner is pleasing (εὐάρεστος) to God and approved by people. So let us pursue matters of peace and matters of edification.”

\(^{30}\) Reumann, *Philippians*, 395.

something one can offer to God, especially if it is a gift from God?”

The image of Paul being “poured out as a libation” has been read as emphasizing Paul’s “self-sacrifice” and even prefiguring his “martyrdom” as a freewill sacrifice for the sake of the Church. There is no precedent, however, for understanding something or someone “poured out” or otherwise sacrificed as a martyr in any ancient source contemporaneous with Paul. In my view, this reading interpolates anachronistic, post-Pauline Christian notions about the nature of sacrificial practice into the passage. I find it more historically plausible that the passage portrays Paul as playing a necessary but ancillary role in the offering of the faithfulness of the Philippians to God. In Judean (and non-Judean) sources libations are common though secondary components of the prescribed festal offerings to God (e.g., Num 28-29).

I suggest that the concessive force of the phrase, “even though” (εἰ καὶ) might express Paul’s reserve at playing such an ancillary or secondary role in the human-divine transaction. At any rate, the passage presupposes that Paul will endure his being poured out to rejoice alongside the Philippians.

Rom 12:1-2 has elicited a great deal of scholarly and theological interest on the topic of sacrifice in the Pauline epistles, for it exhorts its addressees to present their bodies as a “living sacrifice” and an “intellectual service” to God:

(v. 1) I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present (παραστῆσαι) your bodies (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν) as a living sacrifice (θυσίαν ζῴαν), sanctified and

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32 Reumann, *Philippians*, 401. See Reumann’s bibliography for text-critical and interpretive attempts to undo the meaning of the passage.
33 Reumann, *Philippians*, 397-399.
35 Cf., Reumann, *Philippians*, 398, “Paul has no intention to commit suicide. He is already pouring himself out as a libation in his missionary career and current situation. Therefore not of death, let alone martyrdom, but of apostolic labors and sufferings, including now prisons.”
36 On this passage, see Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 637-641;
pleasing to God (ἅγίαν τῷ θεῷ εὐάρεστον), your intellectual service (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν). 37 (v.2) Do not be conformed with this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind (τῇ ἄναξαινώσει τοῦ νοῶς) so that you may examine what indeed is the will of God—good and pleasing and perfect.

In my view, verse one of this passage cannot be properly understood without consideration of verse two. The transformation of the mind (νόος) referred to in the second verse likely refers to one of the principal effects that Paul attributes to initiation into Christ through the practice of baptism. 38 Baptism infuses the initiate with “holy spirit” (1 Cor 12:1-13), 39 and effects the initiates’s death and rebirth in Jesus Christ, which frees one’s mind from enslavement to sin (Rom 6:1-14), God’s punishment for Gentile idolatry (Rom 1:18-31). Paul’s statements, “we have received… the spirit that is of God (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ)” (1 Cor 2:12) and, “we have the mind (νοῦν) of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16) are especially relevant in this regard. One who has the mind of Christ is able to examine—and presumably to act in conformity with—the will of God, and to act in nonconformity with the present age, which is characterized by behavior stemming from God’s having surrendered the Gentiles to enslavement to sinful passions.

Verse one, in this reading, exhorts the Roman addressees to behave in accordance with their newly-obtained liberation from enslavement to bodily passions. Such behavior constitutes a “living sacrifice” to God inasmuch as it is a gesture that pleases God in the manner of an acceptable sacrifice; it constitutes “intellectual service” inasmuch as it proceeds from the seat of one’s intellect, freed now through baptism in Christ.

Michael Newton has argued that the phrase, “intellectual service” in Rom 12:1 actually encodes an outright rejection of the sacrifices offered at the Jerusalem Temple:

37 Fitzmyer, Romans, 637, translates “as a cult suited to your rational nature.”
38 Fitzmyer, Romans, 641.
39 Given the apparent centrality of this concept, I find it somewhat surprising that the extant letters do not say more about it.
[W]e must not overlook logikos as meaning “rational” [“intellectual”] as well as “spiritual.” This would mean that Paul is saying that these sacrifices are now more fitting in the light of the Christ event and the life of the Spirit in which believers now live. The sacrifices of the Temple in Jerusalem are now of no use. The offerings made by the Christians are the only ones God will accept. It is now in this sense that they are “rational”: in the light of the aeon in which believers now live these sacrifices are the only ones that, as it were, make sense.\(^4^0\)

Newton reads this passage as participating in the project of the “spiritualization” of sacrifice; spiritual sacrifices are now more fitting for the Christian “life of the Spirit” than the bloody sacrifices of the old eon. Whatever the merits of the “spiritualization of sacrifice” argument (and they are few),\(^4^1\) there is no precedent for translating the adjective, logikos (λογικός) as “spiritual;” it might mean “relating to speech,” “possessed of reason,” “intellectual,” and “dialectical,” but not “relating to spirit (πνεῦμα),” the Greek word for which is well attested in the Pauline epistles, pneumatikos (πνευματικός; e.g., Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 2:15).\(^4^2\) Moreover, neither this text nor any other in the Pauline epistles draws a clear contrast between “bloody” and “spiritual” sacrifices. Similarly, there is no basis for Newton’s claim, “Paul is saying... [t]he sacrifices of the Jerusalem Temple are now of no use.” The rhetoric of the passage simply does not invoke this stark and blatantly supersessionist contrast between the “rational” sacrifices of the “Christians,” which are acceptable to God, and the bloody sacrifices of the Jerusalem Temple (i.e., those of the Judeans), which God no longer accepts. Rather, Paul here employs the term “sacrifice” as he does elsewhere in the letters, to refer to human

\(^4^0\) Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 71.
\(^4^2\) Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 640, advocates a similar translation: “‘spiritual cult’, i.e., worship governed by the logos, as befits a human being with nous and pneuma, and not merely one making use of irrational animals.”
practices and dispositions that are pleasing and acceptable to God.

Above I have argued that the Pauline epistles draw conceptual associations between sacrifices and practices associated with human-divine reciprocal exchange. In the section to follow, I argue that there is no clear evidence to support the common scholarly position that the Pauline epistles express a sacrificial theology of Jesus’ death based on biblical ideas about sacrifice and atonement. According to this line of interpretation, the letters contain clear indications that Paul understood Jesus’ death to have functioned as a “sin offering” or “sin sacrifice” in broad accordance with the instructions for such sacrifices as they appear in the Septuagint, and, moreover, that Paul endeavored to convey this understanding to his addressees. For example, James Dunn, one of the most forceful proponents of this position,\(^{43}\) asserts:

One of the most powerful images used by Paul to explicate the significance of Christ’s death is that of the cultic sacrifice, or more precisely the “sin offering” which could be offered up by individuals or groups in the Jerusalem temple (Lev 4) and the annual Day of Atonement sacrifices (Lev 16:11-19).\(^{44}\)

Dunn and other scholars have marshaled three articles of textual evidence in support of this position: First, it is frequently asserted that Paul’s depiction of Jesus as a *hilastērion* (lit. “conciliation,” “propitiation”) in Rom 3:25 evokes the biblical prescriptions for the annual expiation and purification of Yahweh’s sanctuary (Lev 16), which in turn implies that the passage likens Jesus’ death to that of the young bull or the goat that are to be sacrificed as “sin sacrifices,” the blood from which is to be sprinkled on the “mercy-seat”


\(^{44}\) Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 211-212.
Second, it is asserted that Paul’s statement that God sent Jesus peri hamartias (Rom 8:3), a literal rendering of which would be, “for/on account of error/sin,” actually employs technical cultic terminology from the Septuagint and expresses the idea that Jesus was sent “as a sin offering.” Third, it is claimed that Paul’s statement, “Jesus, our Passover [sacrifice], was sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7) associates Jesus’ death with a festival that biblical texts strongly associate with sacrificial atonement. In my view, each of these arguments rests upon problematic construals of the relevant Pauline and Septuagintal evidence in conjunction with the doubtful proposition that Paul presumes that his addressees possess intimate familiarity with a particular reading of the cultic terminology of the Septuagint (not only the Pentateuch but also Ezekiel). I will consider all of this evidence in detail, showing that scholars have overstated the points of affinity between the Pauline material and the relevant biblical cultic texts while overlooking significant points of discontinuity.

Romans 3:21-26 occupies a central position in the arguments of many scholars who support the idea that Paul understood Jesus’ death to have functioned as a “sin sacrifice.” James Dunn describes this passage as “what can hardly be regarded as other than the core of his own as well as of his shared gospel.” I quote the passage in full:

(v.21) But now outside of the law a justification of God has been revealed, witnessed by the law and the prophets, (v.22) a justification of God through the faithfulness of Christ, for the sake of all those who are faithful, for there is no

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45 For a recent and thorough defense of this position, see Finlan, *Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors*, 123-162, 226-227.
48 Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 213.
This passage explains how a person might be “justified”—that is, vindicated or acquitted—from God’s judgment of erroneous/sinful humankind, the indictment of whom is the subject of much of the previous content of the epistle (Rom 1:18-3:20). This, of course, raises the difficult question of how this justification is imagined to function.⁵⁰ James Dunn argues that Rom 3:24-26 expresses a theology of atonement that is specifically and significantly “sacrificial.”⁵¹ The usage of the term hilastérion in the Septuagint is of primary importance for unpacking the sacrificial meaning of the passage:

The key term here is “expiation,” hilastérion. This must have a sacrificial reference, for the term is used almost exclusively in LXX for the lid of the ark, the “mercy seat,” the place where, on the Day of Atonement, atonement was made for the holy place and for all the assembly of Israel.

Dunn translates the term hilastérion as “expiation”⁵² and argues that it has a “sacrificial reference”—in other words, it refers to “sacrificial expiation”—because the term is employed in the Septuagint to refer to the lid of the ark of the testimonies.

Dunn is correct in stating that the Septuagint employs the term hilastérion as a translation for the Hebrew noun kappōret (כסף), “lid, cover.” This translation choice likely comes by virtue of the fact that the noun hilastérion derives from the verb hilaskomai (“conciliate, seek the favor of”), which shares the same lexical root as the

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⁵⁰ Käsemann, Romans, 92, comments “This section has rightly been called one of the most obscure and difficult in the whole epistle. But the reason for this is not clear.”

⁵¹ Dunn, Theology of Paul, 213-216.

⁵² Käsemann, Romans, 91, also translates, “expiation.”
verb *exilaskomai* ("expiate"), which is employed to translate the Hebrew verb *kippêr* ("wipe clean," "perform rites of expiation"), which shares the same lexical root as the noun *kappôret*. This fact, however, does not necessitate that *hilastêrion* means "expiation" and "must have a sacrificial reference" in Rom 3:21-27, for it does not mean this in the Septuagint. The Septuagint employs the term *hilastêrion* twenty-one times in six separate passages (Ex 25:16-21; Num 7:89; Lev 16:2-20; Ezek 43:13-21; Amos 9:1; 1 Chr 28:11), where it always means "cover" or some related architectural term and never means "expiation" or "sacrificial expiation," as Dunn suggests.\(^53\)

Much hangs on the meaning of *hilastêrion*; therefore, I shall proceed through these texts in detail, leaving the term untranslated in order that the context might help to adduce its meaning.

Exodus 25:16-22 employs the term *hilastêrion* seven times in providing instructions for the construction of a gold cover that is to be placed over the ark of testimony:

(v.16) You shall put the testimonies that I give you into the ark [of the covenant].
(v.17) You shall make a *hilastêrion* — a cover (*epithema*) —of pure gold (καὶ ποιήσεις ἱλαστὴριον ἐπίθεμα χρυσοῦ καθαροῦ), two and a half cubits by length and one and a half cubits by width. (v.18) You shall make two golden cherubs and put them next to the sides of the *hilastêrion*. (v.19) The cherubs shall be set on either side of the *hilastêrion*, facing each other. Thus shall you make the two cherubim on both sides. (v.20) The two cherubim will spread their wings above, overshadowing the *hilastêrion*, and the faces of the cherubim shall face one another above the *hilastêrion*. (v.21) You shall place (ἐπιθέμεα) the *hilastêrion* above the ark, and you shall put the testimonies that I will give you inside the ark. (v.22) I will be known to you from there, and I will speak to you from above the *hilastêrion* between the two cherubim that are above the ark of the testimony concerning all that I command you with respect to the Israelites.

In the translation above I have construed the noun *epithema* as a gloss for the word

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The word *epithema* derives from the Greek verb *tithēmi* “put” (τίθημι) in conjunction with the preposition *epi* “upon” (ἐπί), yielding, “that which is put upon [something].” The verb “put upon” (ἐπιτίθημι) appears with the *hilastērion* as its object in verse 21. I suggest that the translators of the Septuagint opted for this glossed translation in order that they might convey their understanding of the lexical root of the word *kappōret* (Heb. *kippēr*; Gk. *hilaskomai*) as well as the basic role of the object, that is, a cover or lid for the ark. Three factors support reading *epithema* as a gloss. First, the Hebrew text (MT) employs only one word for the cover throughout the passage, *kappōret*; there is no textual precedent for the two-word Greek phrase, *epithema hilastērion*. Second, the passage marks first instance of the potentially obscure usage of the word *hilastērion* in the text of the Septuagint; hence, a gloss is contextually appropriate. Third, all subsequent renderings of the noun *kappōret* do not employ the word *epithema*, which suggests that it does not convey a discrete semantic component of the phrase, *hilastērion epithema*. In contrast to my reading, Christian translations of the Septuagint have typically construed the first instance of the word *hilastērion* as an attributive adjective that modifies the noun *epithema*, yielding, “atonement cover” (NIV) or, more commonly, “mercy seat” (KJV, RSV, NRSV, cf. JPS “cover”). These translations render subsequent instances of the word *hilastērion* as “atonement cover” or “mercy seat” in spite of the absence of the word *epithema*, treating it as an elliptical adjectival–nominal phrase. This translation practice not only obscures the possibility that the ancient translators of this passage understood *hilastērion* to mean simply “lid” or

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54 Finlan, *Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors*, 125, also translates *epithema* as a gloss.
55 The RSV and NRSV have “mercy seat” in the text but provide “cover” as an alternative translation in the notes.
“cover,” it also imbues the physical cover with a particular “atonning” adjectival quality that is not obvious in either the Greek or Hebrew versions of this and subsequent passages. The final verse of the passage states that the Lord will speak to Moses from above the *hilastérion*, which apparently constitutes his earthly abode. Numbers 7:89 similarly depicts the *hilastérion* as the place from which the Lord speaks to Moses:

“When Moses entered the tent of testimony to speak with him, he heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him from above the *hilastérion*, which is above the ark of the testimony, between the two cherubim, and he spoke to him.”

Leviticus 16:2-20 employs the word *hilastérion* seven times, and each time the word refers to the cover of the ark rather than to some abstract notion of “expiation” or “sacrificial expiation.” The first two instances of the word appear in a warning against Aaron (i.e., the high-priest) entering the sanctuary beyond the veil that hangs behind the altar of incense: “The Lord said to Moses: Tell your brother Aaron that he may not go at any given time into the sanctuary (τὸ ἅγιον) beyond the veil, to the front of the *hilastérion* that is upon the ark of the testimony (εἰς πρόσωπον τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου ὃ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῆς ξυβωτοῦ τοῦ μαρτυρίου) lest he die, for I will appear in a cloud over the *hilastérion* (ἐπὶ τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου)” (Lev 16:2; cf. 1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:13, 14). The *hilastérion* covers the ark of testimony, and is the location where the Lord (i.e., Yahweh) will appear in a cloud to kill those who intrude into his earthly abode. The other five occurrences of *hilastérion* appear in the following passage, which prescribes rites of expiation for the tent of meeting, the sanctuary, and the altar of incense:

Aaron shall lead forward the young bull that is for his error/sin (τὸν μόσχον τὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ.), and he shall perform rites of expiation (ἐξιλάσεται) for himself and his household. He shall slay the young bull that is for his error/sin. He shall take a censer full of burning coals from the altar that is before the Lord.
(i.e., the altar of incense), and he shall fill his hands with fine incense, and he shall carry it inside the veil. He shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke shall cover the hilastērion (ἵλαστήριον) that is on top of the testimonies, but he will not die. He shall take some of the blood of the young bull and he shall sprinkle the hilastērion with his finger toward the east; toward the front of the hilastērion he shall sprinkle the blood of the calf seven times with his finger. He shall slay the kid goat that is for error/sin, the one that is for the people, before the Lord. He shall carry its blood and he shall do with its blood what he did with the blood of the young bull; he shall sprinkle the hilastērion, the front of the hilastērion. He shall expiate the sanctuary of the impurities (ἀκαθαρσίων) of the Israelites, of their injustices (ἀδικημάτων), for all their errors/sins (ἁμαρτίων). Thus shall he do in the tent of testimony, the one built among them, in the midst of their impurity (ἐν μέσῳ τῆς ἀκαθαρσίας αὐτῶν)... [Then] he shall take some of the blood of the young bull and some of the blood of the kid goat and he shall put it around the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle it with some of the blood seven times, and he shall purify it and sanctify it from the impurities of the Israelites. He shall finish performing rites of expiation for the sanctuary, and the tent of testimony (Lev 16:11-20a).

Aaron first burns incense and envelops the hilastērion in a cloud of incense smoke, which recalls the image of Yahweh appearing in the midst of a cloud from earlier in the chapter. Aaron then sprinkles the hilastērion with the blood of his young bull and the kid goat of the people. This sprinkling effects the expiation of the impurities, injustices, and errors/sins of the Israelites from the sanctuary. The role of the hilastērion is similar to that of the horns of the altar, which are also sprinkled with blood thus effecting the purification of the entire altar of incense. That the hilastērion is involved in these rites of expiation is noteworthy, but this fact does not imply that hilastērion means or should be translated as “expiation” or “sacrificial expiation” (e.g., ἢ he shall sprinkle the expiation, the front of the expiation”). It is also noteworthy that the rites of expiation do not effect the remission, forgiveness, or atonement of the errors and transgressions of the Israelites.

1 Chr 28:11 mentions the hilastērion in its enumeration of the contents of the plan of the Temple that David gave to Solomon: “David gave Solomon his son the plan of the temple (τοῦ ναοῦ), its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner storerooms,
and the house of the hilastērion.” This usage is in keeping with the Priestly sources treated immediately above.

Ezekiel 43:13-21 employs the term hilastērion five times. While the usage of the term here is different from that of the sources quoted above, it corroborates the idea that those ancient translators that employed the word hilastērion understood it to constitute an architectural term that is a rough equivalent of the word epithema. Indeed, in this case hilastērion is employed to translate the Hebrew term ʿāzārâ (עזר), which has no connection to the root kippēr and which refers to the intermediate levels of a stepped, pyramidal altar for whole-burnt offerings in the Temple vision (Ezek 40-48):

These are the measurements of the altar in cubits—cubits that are a cubit and a handbreadth [in length]: Base: (κύλλωμα; lit. “bulging out”): a cubit in height and a cubit in width, with a rim of a hand span’s length around its edge. This is the height of the altar: From the bottom of the base to the lower hilastērion (ἵλαστήριον; Heb. הֶזר) is two cubits, and its breadth is one cubit, and from the smaller [i.e., lower] hilastērion to the larger hilastērion is four cubits, and its breadth is a cubit. The altar is four cubits [in height] and the horns are a cubit above the altar. The altar is square, twelve cubits in length by twelve cubits [in breadth]. The [upper] hilastērion is a square of fourteen cubits in length by fourteen cubits in breadth, with a rim around it of half a cubit, and its encirclement [i.e., the lower hilastērion] is a cubit around its sides. [The altar’s] steps face eastward. He said to me: Son of man, thus says the Lord God. These are the regulations for the altar on the day of its construction in order that you might offer whole-burnt offerings upon it and pour blood upon it. You shall give the priests, the Levites that are of the seed of Zadok, the ones who approach me, says the Lord God, to serve me, a young bull of the herd on account of error/sin (μόσχον ἐκ βοῶν περὶ ἁμαρτίας). He shall take some of the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, and on the four corners of the hilastērion, and on the base around it, and they shall purify it and perform rites of expiation for it (καθαρίσουσι καὶ ἐξιλασοῦνται αὐτό). They shall take the young bull that is for error/sin and they shall incinerate it in the designated part of the temple outside of the sanctuary (Ezek 43:13-21).

In my reading, the passage envisions a hilastērion as a kind of “cover” in the sense of an object that sits on top of the base of the altar but below the altar proper. That the priests are to purify the hilastērion and perform rites of expiation for it does not imply that the
*hilastērion* is an active agent in the process, nor that the term means, “expiation.”

Indeed, as with the prescriptions of Lev 16, the *hilastērion* receives the same treatment as the horns of the altar and, in this case, the “bulging” base of the altar as well.

The rough semantic equivalence of *hilastērion* and architectural objects that perform a covering function finds further corroboration in Amos 9:1a, which renders the Hebrew word *kaptôr*, “capital” (כםתר) —i.e., the cover piece of a pillar—as *hilastērion*:

“I saw the Lord standing over the altar and he said: Strike the *hilastērion* and the gateways will be shaken.”

The Septuagint, then, employs the term *hilastērion* twenty-one times in six separate passages, and in each of these passages the term refers to a cover or some related architectural feature. Two of these passages (Lev 16:2-20; Ezek 43:13-21) prescribe rites of expiation for the architectural items referred to by the term—the cover of the ark of testimony in Lev 16, and the intermediate levels of the altar of burnt offerings in Ezek 43. Neither of these texts, however, elaborates on the role of the *hilastērion* in a singular fashion or comments upon its lexical root. I recognize that the shared lexical root of the term for the ark-cover and the verb, “expiate” provides an opportunity for a theologizing interpretation of sacrificial texts and practices; however, neither the Septuagint nor the Pauline epistles take up this opportunity in any discernable manner. Moreover, if the *hilastērion* played a crucial role in the Judean process of atonement, which role some scholars have asserted was recognized by “every pious Jew in Palestine and in the Diaspora,” then the usage of this term by the translators of the Septuagint to refer to a pillar capital and the intermediate levels of a pyramidal altar is puzzling.

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56 Some Hebrew mss have the linguistically close “cover” (כותרת).
I submit that the Septuagint’s idiosyncratic usage of the term *hilastērion* to refer to covers and top-pieces is unhelpful in exegeting Rom 3:25; instead, I suggest that we consider its ordinary Greek usage. The word *hilastērion* is an adjectival/substantive (both forms are attested) derivative of the verb *hilaskomai*, which means “conciliate,” “placate the anger of (a god or person),” or “seek the favor of (a god or person).” The verb is well-attested throughout ancient Greek literature and its meaning is stable from Homer to Plutarch and beyond. Notably, the verb never means “expiate (a sin or impurity)” in any pre-Christian text. This semantic range yields the substantive meaning, “conciliation,” “propitiation,” “something intended to seek favor.”

The occurrences of the term *hilastērion* in ancient sources other than the Septuagint conform to this semantic range, referring to gifts or other objects whose purpose is to conciliate or charm a potentially angry god. Daniel Bailey has shown that the term *hilastērion* appears inscribed on monuments, statues, stelae, and tripods dedicated to the gods. Bailey also discusses Dio Chrysostom, who refers to the Trojan horse as a *hilastērion* intended to conciliate the goddess Athena of Ilium:

They [i.e., the Greeks] ought to leave a most beautiful and grand offering to Athena and inscribe upon it, “A conciliation of the Achaeans to Athena of Ilium.” This would convey great honor to them [i.e., the Trojans].

The offering is (ostensibly) intended to curry the favor of Athena of Ilium, enemy of the Achaeans. Josephus employs the adjectival form, *hilasterios* in a similar manner,

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62 Bailey, “Jesus as the Mercy Seat,” 156.
63 The passage is in secondary sequence, reported speech.
64 Dio Chrysostom, *Or.*, 11.121.
referring to a monument built by Herod in order to conciliate God (or some other divine beings) after having observed ominous portents following his raiding of the tomb of David and Solomon: “[Herod] left [the tomb] in a state of fear, and, on account of that fear, he constructed a conciliatory monument (ἱλαστήριον μνήμα) of white stone in the mouth [of the tomb] at great cost.” In these two examples, then, a hilastērion is that which is intended to placate or conciliate an angry God, that is, a conciliation or propitiation, which fits the context of Rom 3:25 perfectly.

Given the semantic range of “propitiation” and “conciliation,” I prefer to translate hilastērion in Rom 3:25 as “conciliation” because Jesus’ death, according to Paul, has not pacified or propitiated God’s righteous anger in any thoroughgoing manner; the threat of punishment abides for those who remain alienated from God. Moreover, God is both the provider and the reflexive beneficiary of the conciliation, and the notion of God propitiating himself for his own benefit strikes me as odd. In contrast, the notion that God has made available a means of “conciliation” from which he draws some benefit makes sense in light of the of the idea that God loves humankind (Rom 5:8).

In a recent publication Stephen Finlan has rigorously defended the idea that the use of the term hilastērion in Rom 3:25 points specifically to the prescriptions of Lev 16:11-20a and refers to a sacrifice of atonement. Finlan recognizes that “the biblical hilastērion is not an animal victim but a temple installation.” Finlan insists, however, that Paul’s usage of the term hilastērion is metaphorical: “No one questions that Paul’s use of hilastērion in Romans 3 is metaphorical, but there is no consensus as to whether

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65 Ant. 16.182.
66 Finlan, Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors, 123-162.
67 Finlan, Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors, 128.
the concrete referent is the *hilastērion* over the ark.”  

Assuming that the *hilastērion* in Rom 3:25 is a metaphor for some other concrete referent, Finlan argues that the most plausible referents are the animals whose blood is sprinkled over the biblical *hilastērion*:

> Scholars have seen Paul’s metaphor as extending to the animal whose blood is sprinkled there: because the animal, like a man, is a living being, and the animal was killed, as Jesus was... the implied equation can hardly be avoided since the *hilastērion* is the place where the sacrificial animal’s blood is sprinkled... [This is] an imaginative step that the Greek reader probably [took].

Finlan continues:

> The mention of blood and the usage of a technical term that is at the center of the sacrificial system, certainly suggest sacrifice; *hilastērion* is a synecdoche for the atonement or purification process, and it is likely that every pious Jew in Palestine and in the Diaspora knew what... the *hilastērion* (that is, the place of atonement) was.

Finlan thus translates the *hilastērion* of Rom 3:25 as “a sacrifice of atonement (marginal reading: place of atonement).” To my mind, however, several aspects of this approach are problematic. The assertion that “every pious Jew in Palestine and in the Diaspora” was familiar with the role of the *hilastērion* in the annual expiation of the Jerusalem Temple sanctuary is a sweeping and unsupported generalization at best and special pleading in the service of a theological axiom at worst. In addition, Lev 16:11-20a does not speak of the “atonement” of sins in the sense that these sins are forgiven or even passed-over; they are merely expiated from the sanctuary, which does not imply their forgiveness. Moreover, there is no basis for Finlan’s unsupported and unquestioned assertion that the term *hilastērion* in Rom 3:25 is a metaphor. In my view, it is not only

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70 Finlan, *Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors*, 128.
possible but quite likely that Paul intended the word to carry its normal Greek meaning, “conciliation,” which fits the context and the wider Greek usage perfectly. Indeed, there is no precedent for treating any temple installation as a metonym for the animal whose blood is prescribed to purify it. By this logic, we might also translate the terms “horns of the altar of fragrant incense” (Lev 4:7), “the altar of ascending offerings” (Lev 4:7), and “the veil” (Lev 4:17) as terms that mean “sacrifice of atonement,” for the blood of expiatory sacrifices is sprinkled or poured upon them in the “atonement or purification process.” I conclude that Paul’s use of hilasterion in Rom 3:25 does not point to a sacrificial referent and has no connection whatsoever to the biblical prescriptions for error/sin sacrifices.

Returning to the wider discussion of Rom 3:21-26, Dunn argues further that the phrase, “through faith in his blood” portrays Jesus as having died as a sin sacrifice:

[The] several passages in the Paulines which use the phrase “in/through his blood” cannot be adequately understood except as a reference to Christ's death as a sacrifice. The emphasis on blood can hardly have come from the tradition of Jesus’ death, since it was not remembered as particularly bloody. The only obvious allusion is to Jesus’ death understood as a sacrifice, since it was precisely the manipulation of the victim's blood which was the decisive act of atonement.73

Actually there is only one other passage in the secure Pauline epistles that employs the phrase, “in his blood,” Rom 5:8-10:

God guarantees (συνίστησιν) his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more, then, having now been justified in his blood, shall we be saved through him [i.e., Jesus] from the anger. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled (κατηλλάγημεν) to God through the death of his son; how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved in his life.

In my reading, the semantic context of the passage suggests that the phrase, “his blood” refers in a generic sense to Christ’s death, which is mentioned twice and explicitly

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73 Dunn, Theology of Paul, 217.
contrasted with his life.\textsuperscript{74} The passage does not employ any identifiable sacrificial terms or concepts; furthermore, the notion of “justification” obtained “in/through the blood” of a sacrificial animal is entirely absent from biblical cultic texts. Moreover, biblical cultic texts suggest that the burning of the Lord Yahweh’s portion of the offering is an essential component of the rites of expiation that result in the remitting or “atonement” of the (involuntary) offense that occasions the sacrifice, and not only or primarily blood manipulation. Lev 4:26, for example, states: “[The priest] shall offer all of the fat [of the goat for the error/sin of a ruler] on the altar just as the fat of the sacrifice of deliverance, and the priest shall perform rites of expiation on his account, for [the ruler’s] error/sin, and it shall be remitted (ἀφεθήσεται) for him.” Indeed, the prescriptions for offering one variety of error/sin sacrifice do not include any mention of blood manipulation in obtaining the remittance of the error/sin, for the sacrifice is to be composed of grain:

If a person cannot afford two pigeons or two doves, then he shall offer as his gift (δῶρον), on account of [the matter] in which he sinned/erred (περὶ ἑμαρτε), a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, it is [a gift/offering] on account of error/sin (περὶ ἄμματίμας ἐστί). He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take a handful from it as a memorial portion and shall place it on the altar of whole-burnt offerings to the Lord, it is [a gift/offering] on account of error/sin. The priest shall perform rites of expiation (ἐξιλάσεται) for him on account of the error/sin, which he committed, against one of the [commandments], and it shall be remitted (ἀφεθήσεται) for him.

The offering of a “gift” of fine flour on account of an error/sin achieves precisely the same result as the “gift” of an animal or animals to the Lord, the remittance of the offence. This implies that blood manipulation is not “the decisive act of atonement” in biblical cultic texts, as Dunn maintains. This supports my position that the phrase “in his blood” does not signal that Christ is to be understood as a “sin sacrifice.” There is

\textsuperscript{74} Stowers, Rereading of Romans, 210.
absolutely no firm evidence, then, to support the assertion that Rom 3:21-26 depicts Jesus as a “sin sacrifice.”

Turning to the next Pauline text that is marshaled to support the “sin sacrifice” hypothesis, Romans 8:3b states, “God, having sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh (ἐν ὑμιῶματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας) and for error/sin (καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας), condemned the error/sin in the flesh (κατέκρινε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί).”

Dunn has argued that this verse refers to Jesus Christ as a “sin sacrifice”:

Some think peri hamartias should be translated less precisely as “for sin.” But the phrase is used quite often in the LXX to translate the Hebrew (le)chatta’th (חטאת) (“as a sin offering”). Given the centrality of cultic imagery in the key gospel statement of 3:21-26, it must be judged highly likely that Paul intended a similar allusion here. Since the phrase also leads into the next clause (“and condemned sin in the flesh”), it is likely that the peri hamartias indicates the means by which this condemnation was carried out. As we saw with 3:25, it was precisely the sin offering which had been provided by God to deal with sin.

According to Dunn, peri hamartias means “as a sin offering” in the Septuagint; hence, Rom 8:3 expresses the idea that Jesus is sin-offering.76

Dunn is correct in stating that the phrase peri hamartias (lit., “for error/sin”) is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew phrase lēhāṭṭāʾ (חטאת), “as a purification/offense sacrifice,” as well as the Hebrew noun ḥāṭṭāʾ (חטאת), “purification/offense sacrifice.” This latter usage is perhaps most clear in the Septuagint to Ps 40:6 (MT: Ps 40:7): “You did not want a sacrifice (θυσίαν) or an offering (προσφοράν)…” You did

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75 On this passage, see Käsemann, Romans, 212-225; Fitzmyer, Romans, 484-487.
76 Käsemann, Romans, 212, translates, “expiatory sacrifice.” Nicholas T. Wright, The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 224, has also argued in favor of this position: “there can no longer be any room for doubt that when Paul wrote καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας he meant the words to carry their regular biblical overtones, i.e., ‘and as a sin-offering.’” Wright similarly supports his assertion on the basis of his reading of the Septuagint’s cultic terminology: “We may conclude that… περὶ ἁμαρτίας should almost always be translated either ‘sin-offering’ or ‘as a sin-offering’” [222]. More recently, Fredriksen, Sin, 114, has also supported this line of interpretation.
not seek a whole-burned sacrifice or a [sacrifice] for error/sin (ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ ἔξητημοιας).” In this verse, the elliptical phrase peri hamartias functions syntactically as a noun translating the irregular Hebrew noun ἁμαρτίας, which likely refers to a kind of sacrifice like the other three nouns in the passage. This is also the case in Lev 7:37: “This is the law of the whole-burnt offerings (τῶν ὀλοκαυτωμάτων) and of the sacrifice [of grain] (θυσίας), and [of the sacrifice] for error/sin (περὶ ἁμαρτίας) and of the fault [offering] (πλημμελείας).” The Septuagint to Lev 5:11 translates the Hebrew clause, “it is an offense/purification offering” (הָשַׁם חֹטֵא) in a similar fashion, employing peri hamartias in a nominal sense with the copula, “it is [sacrifice] on account of error” (περὶ ἁμαρτίας ἐστι). Throughout the Septuagint, however, this translation practice is inconsistent. The Septuagint translates the other four instances of the Hebrew clause, “it is an offense/purification offering” (הָשַׁם חֹטֵא) employing different Greek formulations. Exodus 29:14 employs the genitive form of hamartia without the preposition peri, “it is [a sacrifice] of error/sin” (ἁμαρτίας γὰρ ἐστὶ). The three other instances of the Hebrew clause employ hamartia in its nominative form, “it is an error/sin [sacrifice] (ἁμαρτία ἐστὶ)” (Lev 4:24; 5:12; 4:21). Only one of the five occurrences of the Hebrew clause, “it is an offense/purification offering,” then, is rendered as peri hamartias. Exodus 30:10 employs a different noun altogether to translate the noun ἁμαρτία: “purification” (καθαρισμὸν). In Ezekiel, two further unambiguously nominal renderings of ἁμαρτία also employ a different lexeme: “conciliation/propitiation (ἱλασμὸν)” (Ezek 44:27), “expiation (τοῦ ἐξιλασμοῦ)” (Ezek 45:19). The phrase, peri

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77 This appears to be an uncommon spelling of the usual term ἁμαρτία.
78 But cf. Lev 6:18: “This is the law of the [sacrifice] of error (οὗτος ὁ νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας).”
hamartias, then, is not a simple rendering for the Hebrew noun ḥaṭṭāʾî, “offense/purification sacrifice.” Thus, even in the unlikely scenario that Paul assumed that his addressees possessed intimate technical knowledge of the Septuagint’s cultic idioms, it remains doubtful that they would construe the phrase peri hamartias, “on account of error/sin” as the phrase, “as an error/sin sacrifice,” for the Septuagint provides no consistent precedent for this construal.

The Septuagint’s adverbial renderings of the Hebrew phrase, “as an offense/purification offering” (Ῥαττά) introduce further problems for Dunn’s line of interpretation. Whereas the Hebrew noun ḥaṭṭāʾî “purification/offense offering” differs from the Hebrew noun ḥaṭṭaʾā “offense/sin,” this differentiation does not appear in the Greek. That is, the Hebrew text has a phonologically distinctive term for this kind of sacrifice; the Greek text does not. Thus, the Greek phrase peri hamartias, when it appears in unambiguously adverbial constructions, might be translated either as “for error/sin” or, following the Hebrew, “as an error/sin sacrifice.” The sacrificial reading of Rom 8:3b is possible only if one adopts the latter translation practice. Two textual features of the Septuagint, however, point the reader to the former meaning (“for error/sin”). First, the Septuagint frequently employs the Greek preposition eis, rather than peri, to refer to the type of sacrifice that a person is to make with an animal or some other substance such as wine or grain: “as a sacrifice (εἰς θυσίαν / εἰς θυσίας);”79 “as a whole-burnt offering (εἰς ὀλοκαύτωμα / εἰς ὀλοκαυτώματος / εἰς ὀλοκαυτώματος);”80 “as a libation

79 Num 15:6; Ezek 45:15.
80 Gen 22:2, 3, 7, 8, 13; Lev 1:10; 5:7; 8:18; 9:2, 3; 12:6, 8; 14:22, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:3, 5; 22:18, 22; 23:12; Num 6:11, 14; 7:15, 21, 27, 33, 39, 45, 51, 57, 63, 69, 75, 81, 87; 8:12; 15:6, 8, 24; 28:3; 1Chr 21:23; 2Chr 31:2; Ezra 6:9; Isa 40:16; Ezek 45:15.
(eis σπονδήν);81 “as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow (eis θυσίαν μεγαλύναι εὐχήν / eis εὐχήν);”82 “as a deliverance sacrifice (eis θυσίαν σωτηρίου / eis σωτήριον; Heb. פנים);”83 “as a sacrifice (eis θυσίαν) [of grain];”84 “as a gift (eis δῶρα)”85 “as a fault sacrifice (eis πλημμέλειαν; Heb. בPixmap);”86 “as an error/sin sacrifice (eis ἁμαρτίαν).”87

Unlike eis, which appears in conjunction with the Septuagint’s entire spectrum of types of sacrifices, peri appears only with hamartia. Lev 5:17-18, which provides instructions for “fault offerings” (Gk: πλημμελείας; Heb: אשם) illustrates this point:

As for the person who should commit a sin/error (ἁμαρτῇ)—doing one of all the commandments which one must not do, but he did not know—and should commit a fault (πλημμέλησι) and take on the error (λάβῃ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν): He will offer (οἴσει) an unblemished ram of the flock, by valuation of silver, as a fault offering (eis πλημμέλειαν) to the priest, and he will perform rites of expiation on his account, on account of his ignorance (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας), of which he was ignorant, and [the fault] will be remitted.

Different prepositions distinguish between the occasion for the sacrifice (περὶ) and the type of sacrifice (eis).

In addition, the Septuagint frequently employs the definite article in its prepositional phrases concerning error/sin sacrifices: “for the error/sin (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας).” The prepositional phrases treated immediately above which employ the preposition eis never employ the definite article in this manner (e.g., *eis τὴν θυσίαν, “as the sacrifice”). The definite construction, “for the error/sin” appears throughout Leviticus and Numbers, including Leviticus chapters 4 and 5, and Numbers 15, which

81 Num 15:5, 7, 10; 28:9.
84 Lev 14:10, 21; Num 7:13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43, 49, 55, 61, 67, 73, 79; 28:5; 28:9; 1Chr 21:23; 2Chr 31:2; Ezek 45:15.
85 Lev 22:27.
86 Lev 5:18; Num 6:12.
87 Num 16:14.
contain the most comprehensive biblical statements pertaining to the functioning of expiatory sacrifices.\(^8\) Both the definite and the indefinite phrase appear as renderings of the Hebrew phrase, “as an offense/purification offering (לְחֻטאת).” Moreover, there are several instances in Leviticus 4-5 in which the hamartias of peri tes hamartias takes a subordinate clause that must refer to the error (“for the error/sin”) that the sacrifice remedies rather than the sacrificial quadruped, birds, or grain that remedies the error:

If the anointed high-priest should err/sin (ἁμαρτησάη), causing the people to err (ἁμαρτέων), then he shall offer (προσέκει) for the error/sin (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας; Heb. חטאתה), which he erred/sinned (ὃς ἁμαρτήσατ), an unblemished young bull of the herd to the Lord for the error/sin (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας; Heb. חטאתו) (Lev 4:3).

The presence of the subordinate clause with the cognate verb (“which he erred”) renders it impossible that the first instance of the phrase peri tes hamartias might refer to the kind of sacrifice as opposed to its occasion (i.e., “as an error/sin sacrifice, which he erred”). Moreover, the Septuagint renders the Hebrew phrase, “on account of his offense (חטאתו על)” using precisely the same phrase that it employs to translate the Hebrew phrase, “as an offense/purification offering” (לְחֻטאת) at the end of the verse. This implies that the ancient translators understood both phrases to mean, “for error/sin” and neither to mean “as an error/sin sacrifice.” The following verses (Lev 4:14, 4:32) similarly render the Hebrew phrase, “as a purification/offense offering (לְחֻטאתו)” into the definite prepositional phrase, “for the error/sin,” which thus equates this phrase with the Hebrew phrase, “on account of his offense (על חטאתו).” Lev 5:8 employs the indefinite prepositional phrase, peri hamartias “for error/sin” to translate “as an offense/purification offering” (לְחֻטאתו),

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\(^8\) Definite (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας): Lev 4:3, 14, 32; 5:8, 9; 6:18; 7:7; 8:2, 14; 9:7, 8, 10, 15, 22; 10:16, 17, 19 (2x); 14:19; 16:6, 11 (2x), 27 (2x); Num 15:25; 29:11. Indefinite (περὶ ἁμαρτίας): Lev 5:6, 7, 11 (2x); 7:37; 9:2, 3; 12:6, 8, 14:13 (2x), 22, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:3, 5, 9, 15; 23:19; Num 6:11, 16; 7:16, 22, 28, 34, 40, 46, 52, 58, 64, 70, 76, 82, 87; 8:8, 12; 15:24, 27; 28:15, 22; 29:5, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38.
thereby equating this phrase, too, with the Hebrew phrase “on account of his offense” (לא חטא). The text provides no cue that the indefinite phrase should be interpreted as referring to the sacrificial animal rather than the error/sin. These features of the Septuagint, then, favor the simple reading “for error/sin” rather than the technical “as an error/sin sacrifice.” This accords with contemporary Greek usage of the phrase as attested by Plutarch: “He [the priest of the temple of Hercules] asked the god about the error (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας), whether there might be some entreaty or expiation.”

The final matter that I shall take up with regard to Dunn’s reading of Rom 8:3b pertains to the verb employed in that verse. Dunn claims: “Since the phrase [“God sent his own son in the very likeness of sinful flesh”] also leads into the next clause (“and condemned sin in the flesh”), it is likely that the peri hamartias indicates the means by which this condemnation was carried out [i.e., as a sin sacrifice].” Sacrifices on account of error/sin, however, are never “condemned” in the Septuagint (or the Hebrew Bible for that matter). Rather, they are “slaughtered” (σφάζω), “brought” (φέρω), “offered/brought to” (προσφέρω), “offered/led to” (προσάγω), “made/done” (ποιέω), “sacrificed” (θύω), and “incinerated” (κατακαίω). None of these verbs carries any connotation of condemnation—whether in a moral or judicial sense—in any way whatsoever. Indeed, in my view no aspect of the terminology of the Septuagint or the Hebrew Bible suggests that the animal or handful of grain that is to constitute an

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89 De Pyth., 404a.
91 Lev 5:6, 7, 11, 15; Num 15:25.
92 Lev 12:7; 16:9; Ezra 6:17; 8:35.
93 Lev 5:8; 10:19.
95 2Chr 29:22, 24.
96 Ezek 43:21.
error/sin sacrifice is to function as a substitutionary vessel by means of which the
offenses of others are condemned, a point that I shall return to further below. If Paul had
intended to express clearly the idea that Jesus died as a biblical error/sin sacrifice, he
might have used a verb (e.g., “offer,” “make,” “slaughter”) and a noun (e.g., “gift,”
“young bull,” “kid goat,” “a pair of doves or pigeons,” “fine-flour”) that are
commonly associated with such sacrifices in the Septuagint, and not merely an
ambiguous prepositional phrase.

Casting further doubt on the idea that Paul understood Christ’s death to have
functioned as some manner of “error/sin sacrifice,” 1 Cor 5:6-8 likens Christ to a
Passover sacrifice, which is never associated with expiation or forgiveness:

(v.6) Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the
dough? (v.7) Purge out the old yeast, in order that you may become new dough, as
you are unleavened. For our Passover has been sacrificed (τὸ πάσχα ἦμῶν
ἐτύθη), Christ. (v.8) Therefore, let us celebrate the festival (ἑορτάζωμεν), not
with old yeast, nor with the yeast of wickedness and vice, but rather with the
unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.

Paula Fredriksen has argued that this passage is more hortatory than descriptive; in her
view, Paul employs the image of Christ sacrificed as a Paschal lamb in order to exhort his
addressees to adopt “unleavened” behavior befitting the new, “festal” context of life in
Christ:

Paul urges his gentile followers to cleanse themselves of the “leaven” of pride in
view of the fact that the (metaphorical) holiday of Passover is already underway. The Paschal image, in other words, refers to Jewish timekeeping (leaven should

98 E.g., Ex 29:36; Lev 4:8.
99 E.g., Lev 4:23; 9:3.
100 Lev 5:7, 11.
101 Lev 5:11, 13.
102 On this passage, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, First Corinthians: A New Translation with
Introduction and Commentary (Anchor Yale Bible 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008),
228-247.
be long gone by the beginning of Passover!), not to a sacrificial death on the part of Christ. (And Paschal offerings, in any case, are not “for sin.”)\textsuperscript{103}

I find Fredriksen’s statements concerning the exhortatory purpose of the passage convincing; I agree that the rhetorical thrust of 1 Cor 5:6-8 has more to do with admonishing its addressees to good behavior than it does articulating a sacrificial theology of Christ’s death. Nevertheless, in my view Fredriksen overlooks the significance of the passage in regard to the hypothesis that Paul understood Jesus’ death to have functioned as a “sin sacrifice.” The fact that Paschal offerings are not offered “for sin” does not negate the sacrificial content of the passage, as Fredriksen intimates. If the idea that Jesus died as a “sin sacrifice” is a central tenet of Paul’s theology, as many scholars have suggested, I find it surprising that the only passage in the entire Pauline corpus that states explicitly that Christ “was sacrificed” does so in a cursory and secondary manner while likening Christ to an expressly non-expiatory type of sacrifice.

Perhaps for these very reasons, James Dunn takes a different approach to the passage, arguing that the image of Christ as Paschal sacrifice does indeed forge associations with biblical ideas about atonement:

This [passage, i.e., 1 Cor 5:7] is rather striking, since the Passover lamb was not strictly speaking a sacrifice. However, the Passover is already associated with atonement in Ezek 45:18-22. And this link was probably already forged in the double association of the Last Supper with the Passover and with Jesus’ “blood poured out (ekchunmomenon) for many” (Mark 14:24). There the language is unavoidably sacrificial and signifies atonement. The same tendency to run together different metaphors and descriptions of Jesus’ death, thereby blurring older distinctions, is clearly evident elsewhere in the early churches. Paul’s language here suggests that the same evolution of imagery was already well advanced in his theology.\textsuperscript{104}

Dunn is plainly mistaken in stating, “the Passover lamb was not strictly speaking a

\textsuperscript{103} Fredriksen, Sin, 36.
\textsuperscript{104} Dunn, Theology of Paul the Apostle, 216-217.
sacrifice.” Ex 12:27 states explicitly that the Passover lamb is a sacrifice: “this is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord (θυσία τὸ πάσχα τοῦτο Κυρίῳ).”\textsuperscript{105} Likewise, Deut 16:2 states: “you shall sacrifice the Passover [sacrifice] to the Lord (θύσεις τὸ πάσχα Κυρίῳ).”\textsuperscript{106} It appears that Dunn considers only expiatory sacrifices to be sacrifices in a strict sense, which is an incorrect position that nevertheless helps to explain his readings of both Paul and biblical cultic texts. Dunn’s argument that Ezek 45:18-22 associates the Passover with “atonement” is also problematic. I quote the passage in full to illustrate:

(v.18) This is what the Lord God says: in the first month [i.e., Nisan], on the first [day] of the month, you shall take a young bull of the herd in order to perform rites of expiation (τὸ ἐξιλάσασθαι) for the sanctuary (τὸ ἀγιον). (v.19) The priest shall take some of the blood of the expiation [sacrifice] (τὸ ἐξιλασμοῦ) and put it on the doorposts of the house, and on the four corners of the Temple, and on the altar, and on the doorposts of the inner court. (v.20) So shall you do in the seventh month, on the first of the month, for each portion, and you shall perform rites of expiation (ἐξιλάσεσθε) for the house. (v.21) The fourteenth [day] of the first month shall be for you the Festival of Passover (τὸ πάσχα ἑορτή). (v.22) On that day the leader shall sacrifice (ποιήσει) a young bull for error/sin (μόσχον ὑπὲρ ἀμαρτίας) for himself, and for the house, and for the people of the land.

The first three verses of Ezek 45:18-22 have no connection to the Passover festival whatsoever. Indeed, this material undermines Dunn’s argument for it prescribes expiatory sacrifices for two calendrical occasions other than Passover. That verse 22 (and also v.23) prescribes an expiatory sacrifice does not indicate that the festival is “already associated with atonement,” nor does it suggest that the Passover sacrifice specifically has taken on an expiatory function. The sacrifice referred to is a “young bull for error/sin,” not a Passover lamb. Expiatory sacrifices are a regular feature in biblical prescriptions for the sacrifices that are to be offered at public festivals and do not signal that a given festival is

\textsuperscript{105} Heb: דַּבֶּרֶךְ פַּסָּחָה וַאֲלֹהָיו

\textsuperscript{106} Heb: וְהָבֵאת פַּסָּחָה וַלִּבָּתו
particularly associated with “atonement.”

Joseph Fitzmyer has similarly claimed that Ezek 45:22 and also Num 28:22 “show that the celebration of Passover came indeed to connote the wiping away of sins.” Num 28:22, however, does not mention any “wiping away of sins” and specifies that rites of expiation are to be performed with a goat rather than one of the seven Paschal lambs that do not perform this function. There is simply no basis for the claim that Passover sacrifices or the Passover festival more generally is especially associated with “atonement” in any biblical text.

Dunn’s claim that the Greek phrase, “blood poured out for many” in Mark 14:24 is “unavoidably sacrificial and signals atonement” is dubious (and its connection to 1 Cor 5:7 is tenuous at best). In Mark 14:23 Jesus and his disciples all drink from the cup that is identified with “my [i.e., Jesus’] blood” in verse 24. Various biblical texts forbid the consumption of blood in both sacrificial and other contexts (Gen 9:4-5; Lev 7:26-27; 17:10-12, 14; 19:26; Dtr 12:16, 23-24; 15:23). Hence, despite the fact that biblical cultic texts prescribe that priests pour out the blood of error/sin sacrifices at the base of the altar of whole-burnt offerings (Lev 4:18, 25, 30), the notion that Mark 14:24 is “unavoidably sacrificial” is unconvincing as it depicts the consumption of blood—whether metaphorical or not—rather than the manipulation of blood that is associated with expiation. Moreover, the “pouring out” of blood is not associated with the practice of sacrifice in any New Testament text (Matt 23:35; 26:28; Luke 11:50; 22:20; Acts 22:20; Rom 3:15; Rev 16:3, 4, 6). It is my conclusion, then, that Paul’s statement that Christ “our Passover [offering] was sacrificed” has no connection to biblical notions of sacrificial expiation.

Some scholars of early Christianity have maintained that the Pauline epistles’ alleged depiction of Jesus’ death as a sin sacrifice accords in a general sense with the prescriptions for such sacrifices in biblical cultic texts. Several significant points of discontinuity emerge, however, upon detailed comparison between the relevant biblical cultic texts (Lev 4:1-35, 5:1-13, Num 15:22-36) and the scholarly sin-sacrifice theorization. First, scholars who support this position often argue that biblical cultic texts depict error/sin sacrifices as functioning in a vicarious substitutionary manner: the person transfers his or her “sin” onto the sacrificial animal, which is then punished in place of the person, just as the sins of humankind are imagined to have been transferred onto Jesus and then punished, thereby remitting these sins. Dunn, for example, writes:

[As] Jesus somehow embodied “sinful flesh” in order to deal with sin in the flesh (Rom 8:3), so presumably Paul saw the sin offering as somehow embodying the sin of the one who offered it… This would probably be the significance for Paul of that part of the ritual where the offerer laid a hand on the beast’s head. Thereby the sinner identified himself with the beast, or at least indicated that the beast in some way represented him. That is to say, the animal represented the offerer qua sinner, so that the offerer’s sin was somehow identified with the animal and its life stood for his. The only difference in Christ’s case is that the initiative came from God rather than from the sinner.109

According to Dunn, the sin transference and identification of the offerer’s life with that of the beast to be slain is purported to take place with the laying of a single hand on the head of the sacrificial animal. This is an expansive reading of a relatively brief prescription: “He shall bring the young bull [for the error/sin] to the door of the tent of the testimony before the Lord, and he shall place his hand on the head of the young bull before the Lord and he shall slay the young bull in the presence of the Lord” (Lev 4:4).110 Biblical cultic texts never mention any manner of sin transference or life-identification in connection

109 Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 219-220.
with this or any other kind of animal sacrifice. Lev 5:5 prescribes that the person who has committed an error of omission should declare the error ("He shall declare the error which he committed"), but this declaration effects no transference and has no connection to any practice of hand laying, taking place in advance of the offering of the goat (5:6), or birds (5:7-10), or handful of flour (5:11-14) that remedies the offense. Indeed, the mere fact that a handful of flour might be offered to remedy the offense undermines the idea that substitutionary killing is the primary logic of the practice. The prescriptions for the scapegoat practice do suggest transference of sins and other offenses onto an animal, but these prescriptions never call the scapegoat a sacrifice nor do they invoke any notion of punishment:

[The high-priest] shall bring the living goat (τὸν χίμαρον τὸν ζῶντα) and he shall place his two hands on the head of the goat and he shall declare all the lawless acts of the Israelites, all their iniquities, and all their errors, and he shall place them on the head of the living goat, and he shall send it out by way of a person prepared [for the task] into the wilderness. The goat shall take all their lawless acts upon itself into a desolate land, and he shall send out the goat into the wilderness (Lev 16:20b-22).

The logic of this practice is expiatory rather than punitive. The goat upon which the high-priest places the misdeeds of the Israelites is not to be killed or otherwise harmed in any way; to the contrary, the misdeeds are to proceed into the wilderness wholly unpunished. This fact undermines the idea that the basis of the expiatory system elaborated in Lev 16 and elsewhere in the Priestly source is some notion of vicarious punishment of human misdeeds through the substitutionary killing of sacrificial animals.

Further undermining the substitutionary hypothesis, the laying of a single hand on the head of the sacrificial animal also appears in the prescriptions for offering non-expiatory sacrifices:
If his gift (δῶρον) to the Lord is a sacrifice of deliverance: If he should offer it from the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it unblemished before the Lord. He shall place his hands on the head of the gift, and he shall slay it by the doors of the tent of testimony, and the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall pour out the blood around the altar of whole-burnt offerings (Lev 3:1-2).

This kind of sacrifice is explicitly and repeatedly classified as a “gift” (Lev 3:1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 12), which produces a “pleasing aroma for the Lord” (ὀσμὴν εύωδίας Κυρίῳ; Lev 3:5, 11, 16). The prescriptions for this kind of sacrifice do not mention the committing of errors or iniquities, nor their expiation or forgiveness; rather, it is a gift that responds to some favorable outcome brought about by Lord Yahweh. In light of this fact, most mainstream biblical scholars interpret the hand laying gesture as crediting the “gift” to its initial owner’s account before its transference to Yahweh, like a card on a gift-wrapped present in contemporary practice. I would suggest further that a similar reciprocal logic obtains also with regard to error/sin sacrifices, which are also explicitly and repeatedly classified as “gifts” (Lev 4:23, 28, 32, 5:11, Num 15:25). Indeed, Num 15:25 associates the offering of the gift of an error/sin sacrifice with the forgiveness of the involuntary error that occasioned the sacrifice:

The priest shall perform rites of expiation (ἐξίλασεται) for the whole congregation of the Israelites, and [the error] shall be remitted (ἀφεθησεται) for them, because it was an involuntary act (ἀκούσιον) and they offered their gift (ἡνεγκαν τὸ δῶρον αὐτῶν), an offering for the Lord, for their error, before the Lord, for their involuntary acts (περὶ τῶν ἀκούσιων αὐτῶν).

The involuntary error is to be forgiven because the error was involuntary and those who committed it have offered an apology gift to the Lord. In my reading, error/sin sacrifices are portrayed as instruments of reciprocity rather than victims of vicarious substitutionary punishment.

The previous section has already touched upon the second significant discontinuity.
between the scholarly theorization of Jesus as sin offering and biblical cultic texts, which pertains to the nature of errors that are to be remitted through the offering of sacrifices. According to Paul, Jesus’ death has allowed for people to be vindicated from the gamut of moral crimes and outright depravity that humankind has come to embody since God abandoned them to their passions. Rom 1:29-32 details some of the elements of this indictment:

[T]hey have been filled with every kind of injustice, harlotry, wickedness, greed; they are sated with jealousy, murder, strife, treachery, malignity, and slander; they cast aspersions; they are haters of God; they are violent, arrogant, pretentious; they devise evil; they are disobedient to their parents, senseless, faithless, lacking in natural affection, hostile, and unmerciful. These ones, who recognize the decree (δικαίωμα) of God—that those who behave [in this manner] are worthy of death—not only do the same things but give their assent to the ones behaving in this manner.

Humans, according to this presentation, are collectively guilty of offenses against God that are sufficiently egregious as to be worthy of capital punishment. This stands in direct contrast to biblical prescriptions for error/sin sacrifices, which might remedy only involuntary errors, as well as a limited range of errors of omission that have explicit cultic connections—not providing testimony at an imprecation (likely involving the invocation of Yahweh), forgetting a sworn oath (also likely involving the invocation of
Yahweh), and forgetting about ritual defilement. There is good evidence that Roman expiatory sacrifices functioned in precisely the same manner, remedying only cultic errors of an unintentional nature. The biblical concern that the error was committed involuntarily appears already in the first verse of the biblical prescriptions for offering

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111 Stowers, Rereading of Romans, 207-208. Lev 5:1-13: “If a person should err and should hear a voice administering an oath and this person is a witness, whether he has seen or [otherwise] knows [relevant information]: if he does not report it he takes on his error. The person that should touch anything unclean […] and should it escape his notice (ἔλαθεν αὐτόν) but afterward he becomes aware (γνῶ), he commits a fault (πλημμελήμη). The person that swears an oath, pronouncing [it] with his lips, whether to do harm or benefit, […] and should it escape his notice but [afterward] he becomes aware of it, if he should he err (ἀμαρτῇ) in any of these matters, he shall declare the error on account of which erred. He shall offer for the matter in which he committed a fault against the Lord, for the error/sin which he committed, a female sheep of the flock, a ewe or a yearling for error/sin, and the priest will perform rites of expiation for him, for his error, which he committed. If his means do not suffice for the sheep, he shall offer on account of the error which he erred (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ ἥμαρτε) two doves or two young pigeons, one for error/sin (ἐνα περὶ ἁμαρτίας) and one as a burnt-offering (ἐνα εἰς ὀλοκλάτωμα). He shall bring them to the priest, and the priest shall offer the one for the error/sin (τὸ περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας) first, and the priest shall pluck off its head from its neck and shall not divide it. He shall sprinkle the blood of the one that is for the error/sin on the side of the altar, and he shall squeeze out (καταστραγγιεί) the remainder of the blood at the base of the altar; it is an error/sin [sacrifice] (ἁμαρτία γάρ ἐστι). The second he shall make a whole-burnt offering (ὁλοκλάτωμα) in due course, and the priest shall perform rites of expiation on account of his error, which he erred (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ ἥμαρτε), and it shall be remitted for him.”

112 Federico Santangelo, “Law and Divination in the Late Roman Republic,” in Law and Religion in the Roman Republic (ed. Olga Tellegen-Çouperus; Boston: Brill, 2012), 31-56: “One of the most important responses of the jurist Q. Mucius Scaevola (cos. 95B.C.E.) dealt with an important religious issue: whether the praetor who carried out business on a dies nefastus should be deemed guilty of a religious crime. The view was that a religious breach could be expiated with a sacrifice if the praetor had violated the prohibition unintentionally (imprudens); however, if the violation had been intentional (si prudens dixit), the offense was not expiable. Varro, De lingua Latina 6.4.30 [trans. Santangelo]: “The praetor who spoke on that day can purify himself by sacrificing an expiatory victim, provided that he made an honest mistake. If he deliberately misspoke, Quintus Mucius affirms that he cannot purify himself in any way, like someone who has committed an impious act.” Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.16.9-10 [trans. Santangelo]: “The priests used to maintain that a rest day was desecrated if, after it had been duly promulgated and proclaimed, any work was done on it. Furthermore, the high priest and the flamens might not see work in progress on a rest day, and for this reason they would give public warning by a herald that nothing of the sort should be done. Neglect of this command was punished by a fine, and it was said that one who had inadvertently done any work on shich had, in addition to the fine, to make atonement by the sacrifice of a pig. For work done intentionally no atonement could be made, according to the pontiff Scaevola; but Umbro says that to have done work that concerns the gods or is connected with a religious ceremony, or any work of urgent and vital importance does not defile the doer” [49].
error/sin sacrifices: “If a person should err \( ( ámbáρτη) \) involuntarily \( ( ἁμαρτιάς) \) with respect to any of the orders of the of Lord, which things he must not do… he shall offer for the error that he committed a young bull of the herd to the Lord for the error” (Lev 4:2-3). This passage pertains to errors committed by the high-priest; subsequent passages pertaining to the congregation of Israelites (4:13-21), the ruler (4:22-26), and commoners (4:27-35) likewise state that the offense to be remitted has been committed “involuntarily” \( ( ἁμαρτιάς) \) (4:13, 22, 27). A roughly corresponding set of prescriptions for error/sin sacrifices appears in Num15:22-37, and this passages emphasizes even more clearly that the errors that are to be remedied through the offering of sacrifices are those that have been committed involuntarily:

Whenever you all should err \( ( διαμάρτυτε) \), not doing all these commandments that the Lord spoke to Moses, when the Lord gave orders to you by the hand of Moses, from the day on which the Lord gave you orders and into your generations, and if it should be hidden from the eyes of the congregation, and if it should happen involuntarily \( ( ἁμαρτιάς) \), then the whole congregation should offer \( ( ποιήσει) \) an unblemished young bull of the herd as a whole-burnt offering \( ( εἰς ὄλοχον) \) for a pleasing aroma to the Lord and its sacrifice \( ( εἰς ὄλοχον) \) of grain and its libation according to the regulation and a kid goat of the flock for error/sin \( ( περὶ ἁμαρτιάς) \). The priest shall perform rites of expiation \( ( ἐξιλάσεται) \) for the entire congregation of the sons of Israel and it shall be remitted \( ( ἀφεθήσεται) \) for them because it was an involuntary act \( ( ὅτι ἁμαρτημένον ἐστι) \) and they offered \( ( ἀνέγκαν) \) their gift \( ( ἄρρημα) \); an offering \( ( ἀνέγκαν) \) for the Lord, for their error/sin \( ( περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῶν αὐτῶν) \) in the presence of the Lord, for their involuntary acts \( ( περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν) \). It shall be remitted \( ( ἀφεθήσεται) \) for the entire congregation of the sons of Israel and for the proselyte that resides among you, because it is an involuntary act \( ( ἁμαρτιάς) \) with respect to the whole people.

The passage mentions the involuntariness of the error that is to be remedied by means of an error/sin sacrifice four times. The next section of the passage provides instructions for offering error/sin sacrifices to remedy an involuntary error committed by an individual:

If one person should err involuntarily \( ( ámbάρτη ἁμαρτιάς) \) he shall offer a yearling goat for error/sin \( ( περὶ ámbάρτιας) \), and the priest shall perform rites of
expiation for the person that committed the involuntary act (ἀξονοματείας), the one who erred involuntarily (ἀμαρτούσης ἀξονοματείας), he shall perform rites of expiation in the presence of the Lord, and it shall be remitted for him. There shall be one law for the native Israelite and the proselyte residing among them, whoever shall commit [an error] involuntarily (ποιήματι ἀξονοματεύματος).

This passage mentions the involuntariness of the error a further four times. The next section of the passage provides instructions for remedying errors that a person commits voluntarily against the Lord’s commandments:

The person who shall commit [an error] with contempt (ἐν χειρὶ ὑπερήφανίας), whether native or proselyte, this one provokes God (τὸν Θεὸν οὕτος παρεξετεί) and the person shall be utterly destroyed (ἐξολοθρεύσεται) from the people, for he disdained the word of the Lord and rejected (διεσκέδασεν) his commandments. That person shall be exterminated (ἐκτρίψει ἐκτριβήσεται); the error is in the person. [When] the Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man collecting wood on the Sabbath. The ones who found him collecting wood led him to Moses and Aaron and the whole congregation of Israelites. They put him under guard for they did not know what to do to him. The Lord said to Moses, “Surely shall you put the man to death, stone him with stones—the whole congregation—outside the camp.” The whole congregation led him outside the camp and they stoned him as the Lord ordered Moses.

In contrast to involuntary errors which might be remedied with a sacrificial gift, brazen violations of the Lord’s regulations result in the destruction of the one who committed the error, in this case by stoning. The implicit assertion here is that voluntary errors/sins cannot be remitted or expiated through the offering of sacrifices. It is my conclusion, therefore, that the kinds of errors that Paul enumerates in Rom 1:29-32 (and elsewhere)—murder, slander, hatred of God, “harlotry”—are wholly incommensurate with the kind of errors that might be remedied through the offering of expiatory sacrifices.

One might raise the objection that if biblical “sin sacrifices” remedy only inadvertent offenses, then this fact indicates that Christ is an exceptional sin sacrifice or that Paul’s thought on this issue is exceptional. Dunn, for example, recognizes that “the
sin offering dealt only with inadvertent or unwilling sins,”¹¹³ but goes on to assert:

[To] say that Jesus died as representative of Adamic humankind and to say that Jesus died as a sacrifice for the sins of humankind was for Paul to say the same thing. And even if the rationale cannot be traced back firmly to a Hebrew theology of sacrifice, it certainly seems to be the theological logic of Paul’s own thought.¹¹⁴

But this is special pleading and having it both ways: Dunn has treated the slightest point of continuity between Paul and biblical cultic texts—even a single word—as evidence that Paul understood Jesus to have died as a “biblical sin sacrifice;” here, he simply discounts the many significant points of discontinuity between these corpora. In my view, there is vastly insufficient linguistic and conceptual grounds to support the assertion that Paul understood Jesus’ death as a sin-sacrifice; consequently, this position ought to be discarded.

The conclusions above raise anew the question of how, then, Paul imagined Jesus’ death to have functioned in making available a means of divine acquittal and reconciliation for sinful humankind, if not as a “sin sacrifice.” To my mind, a tentative answer to this question emerges from two considerations: First, the sinfulness of humankind hinges in large measure on their refusal to recognize God’s majesty and to give him honor and gratitude: “having knowledge of God they did not honor him as God (ός θεόν ἐδόξασαν) or pay him gratitude (ηὐχαρίστησαν)… therefore God surrendered them in the passions of their hearts to impurity, their bodies being dishonored among themselves” (Rom 1:21-24). It is noteworthy that this formulation is explicitly reciprocal: humans did not pay God his due respect. Second, Paul draws a connection between honoring God and being faithful to him against all odds—even in the face of

¹¹³ Dunn, Theology of Paul the Apostle, 218-219.
¹¹⁴ Dunn, Theology of Paul the Apostle, 218-219, emphasis added.
death—in his narrative of Abraham:

Against hope, [Abraham] in hope was faithful (ἐπίστευσεν) to the end that he would become a father of many nations in accordance with the oracle, “Your offspring shall be thus.” He was not weakened in faithfulness even as he recognized the mortification (νεκρωμένον) of his own body, how he was a hundred years old, and the mortification of Sarah’s womb (νέκρωσιν). He did not question God’s promise in unfaithfulness; rather, he was empowered (ἐνεδυναμώθη) in faithfulness, giving honor to God (δοὺς δόξαν θεῷ). He was satisfied that what had been promised was possible, and that he was able to perform [it]; therefore, it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Now it was not written on his account alone that it was reckoned as righteousness, but on our account also, to whom it will be accounted, to those who are faithful to the one who raised Jesus our lord from the dead (ἐκ νεκρῶν), who was surrendered for our transgressions (παραπτώματα) and who was raised for our justification (Rom 4:18-25).

For Paul, in my reading, Abraham provides an example of ideal faithful obedience to God. In spite of Abraham’s recognition that his own body, as well as Sarah’s womb, were dying—undergoing advanced mortification due to aging—Abraham remained faithful to God and never doubted God’s promise of numerous offspring. Paul explicitly equates Abraham’s faithfulness throughout this trial of dying with “giving honor to God,” precisely that which sinful humankind failed to do thus prompting God to surrender them to sinful passions. Abraham thus achieved his own “justification” through his faithfulness, his steadfast conviction that God is capable of fulfilling his promise even if this involves annulling the power of death and dying.

I tentatively hypothesize, then, that Paul understood the death and resurrection of Christ to have provided an analogous opportunity for humankind to rightly recognize and acknowledge God’s majesty in the particular matter of his supremacy over death.115 This

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115 For a fuller account that is in most regards compatible with that elaborated here, see Stowers, Rereading of Romans, 213-226.
opportunity is the “conciliation” that God “put forward” in Rom 3:25; \(^{116}\) God will forgive human disobedience and dishonor and will be reconciled with those who faithfully acknowledge his power and grant him his due honors; recognizing God’s power in having resurrected Christ manifests just such faithfulness. \(^{117}\) God rewards people who adopt this manner of faithfulness in due measure: they receive the spirit of God, by means of which Christ was raised from the dead, and which renders humans ultimately imperishable. \(^{118}\) Jesus’ death defeats sin because it has granted humans an opportunity to rectify the very error that led them into sinfulness, the failure to grant him due honor.

To conclude: throughout this chapter I have pursued two discrete arguments in connection to the topic of sacrifice in the Pauline epistles. First, I have shown that Paul employs sacrificial terminology and concepts to describe practices that are explicitly tied to human-divine reciprocal exchange. Paul describes both adherence to his ethical-religious program and donations to himself and the “holy ones” in Jerusalem as sacrifices that are pleasing and acceptable to God. Paul asserts that donations in particular will be rewarded generously by God. This material associates sacrificial terms and concepts with human-divine reciprocity, thus supporting the reciprocal theory of sacrifice pursued in the earlier chapters of this study. In addition, this material undermines the position that the Pauline epistles articulate a religiosity that emphasizes “faith” at the extreme expense of “works;” certain concrete human practices are said to please God and elicit tangible rewards. Second, I have shown that the three articles of evidence that scholars frequently marshal in support of the hypothesis that the Pauline epistles articulate a sacrificial

\(^{116}\) 1 Cor 1:9.
\(^{117}\) 1 Cor 15:14-17; 1 Thess 1:3.
\(^{118}\) 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; Gal 3:14.
theology of Jesus’ death are problematic in that regard: First, the term *hilastērion* does not mean “expiation” or “sacrificial expiation” in the Septuagint or any other Greek source contemporaneous with Paul; it means either “conciliation” or “cover/top piece.” Second, the prepositional phrase *peri hamartias* means “for sin/error” in the Septuagint and is not a technical term that is equivalent to the Hebrew phrase, “as a sin-offering.” Third, biblical texts do not draw a special association between the Passover sacrifice and “atonement.” In place of the Jesus’ death as “sin-sacrifice” hypothesis, I have suggested that Paul viewed Jesus’ death as an opportunity provided by God to recognize God’s power over life and death, thereby acknowledging his majesty and rectifying the dishonor that they showed him through their adoption of idolatry.
CHAPTER SEVEN
Reciprocity and Salvation in the Pauline Epistles and Dead Sea Scrolls

In this chapter I return to the two bodies of evidence treated in the two preceding chapters, the Pauline epistles and the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus, with exclusive attention in the latter corpus to the *Rule of the Community* and the *Damascus Document*. I will argue that each of these sets of texts portrays the contemporary status of human-divine relations in a manner that is remarkably similar to the other and remarkably different from other Judean evidence contemporaneous with the Second Temple. Whereas biblical texts and Second Temple period Judean authors such as Ben Sira, Philo, and Josephus generally assume a relatively amiable human-divine relationship within which appropriate exchanges of pleasing favors are not only possible but altogether expected, the texts that are the focus of the present chapter argue that many humans have committed grievous offenses against God with the result that God has withdrawn entirely from normal interactions with them.¹ In fact, these texts assert that God is preparing to bring suit against those sinful humans and to punish them violently in some manner of calamitous eschatological judgment, escape from which is a person’s last and only hope of salvation. The solution to the coming calamity that these texts advance underscores the enormity of the break in the human-divine relationship. Both corpora advocate initiation into the

¹ Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 207: “Unlike the later forms of Christianity, the Jewish temple system was not premised on the assumption of an essential brokenness in divine/human relations and the solution to sin and death that would lead beyond this world.”
exclusive social formations that are the respective foci of these texts, which initiation effects a thoroughgoing transformation of the essence of the initiate, the restoration of favorable relations with God, escape from God’s punishments, as well as other tangible benefits such as eternal life, personality improvements, and freedom from the control of malevolent divine beings. What is required to achieve a person’s escape from God’s angry judgment, then, is not some pleasing gesture on the part of the offending party in the manner of a sacrifice or gift, but rather a thoroughgoing change in the person’s essence and character.

This argument is of relevance to the wider arguments of the present study for two reasons. First, as with the material pertaining to sacrifice treated in the previous chapters, reciprocal terminology and concepts are prominent and central in the texts that I analyze below. For a brief example, the Damascus Document asserts that evil people “will be repaid their recompense when God punishes the earth” (CD 19:5-7). Likewise, according to Paul, “on the day of wrath” God will “repay” humans for their offenses (Rom 2:5-6). In my view, this model of human-divine interaction presumes the same social-reciprocal conceptual framework as does the model of the exchange of pleasing favors. Although these texts posit a starkly negative rather than a positive or neutral relational starting point—that is, the relationship between humans and God begins at a considerable deficit—this difference is a matter of more or less and does not represent a change in paradigm.

Second, I propose that consideration of this dire construal of human-divine reciprocal relations offers a novel explanatory approach to the relative lack of a place for the offering of sacrifices and other practices of everyday reciprocity in the respective

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2 All translations of Greek and Hebrew in this chapter are my own unless otherwise noted.
religious programs that these texts advance. In the two preceding chapters I argued, among other things, that both the Pauline epistles and the “non-biblical” texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus associate the offering of sacrifices with amicable human-divine reciprocity and also that neither corpora presents any manner of categorical problem with the practice of sacrifice or criticizes it as an inferior or derelict mode of religiosity. Nevertheless, these corpora are noteworthy by virtue of the fact that they constitute our most extensive evidence for Judean religion that is contemporaneous with the Jerusalem Temple but that does not directly advocate offering sacrifices or related practices in connection with the contemporary Jerusalem Temple. This absence has been explained as reflecting the progressive “spiritualization” of sacrifice that took place in the evolving religious landscape of ancient Judaism or the wider context of the ancient Mediterranean basin. Jonathan Klawans and other scholars have shown the weaknesses of the “spiritualization” argument, but, to my mind, an alternative account that explains this development in a historically and rhetorically plausible manner has yet to emerge. In my view, the relative lack of a place for the practice of sacrifice in these texts is perfectly consistent with the particular—and particularly dire—construal of the human-divine relationship that these texts advance. Furthermore, the types of human crimes that have

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3 In chapter five I argued that the polemic against the Jerusalem Temple priesthood that runs through the Dead Sea Scrolls and culminates in the Damascus Document’s prohibition against offering sacrifices in the Temple cult is likely an innovation on the part of the “sectarians” themselves rather than some traditionalist protest against the Hasmoneans. Herman Lichtenberger, “Atonement and Sacrifice in the Qumran Community,” in Approaches to Ancient Judaism Volume II (Ed. William S. Green; Brown Judaic Studies 9; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 159-167, has argued persuasively that the “Qumran community… expected to inherit the temple in Jerusalem at some future time” [160]. My interpretation here is that salvation takes precedence over the offering of sacrifices only at this particular and particularly problematic period.

precipitated the indictments in both corpora would have been considered irremediable through expiatory sacrifices by ancient Mediterranean audiences, Judean or not.

My approach to this material differs in three important respects from previous scholarly treatments. First, for the purposes of the present inquiry I am not treating the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus and the Pauline epistles as evidence for two distinct religions, “Second Temple Judaism” and “Early Christianity.” I recognize on the one hand that the Pauline epistles argue that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has made possible the salvation of the Gentiles and on the other that the Rule of the Community and especially the Damascus Document display a marked preoccupation with priestly matters involving the Jerusalem Temple. In my view, however, these differences do not preclude side-by-side consideration of the remarkably similar features of these corpora that I have outlined above pertaining to the framework of indictment, initiation, and salvation.5

Second, many scholars have not considered the reciprocal and relational aspect of our evidence for Judean sacrifice in juxtaposition with the initiatory and transformative aspect of the respective religious programs of the Pauline epistles and the Dead Sea Scrolls. This has led some scholars to conclude that the initiatory practices involving sanctification and purification that are advocated in the latter corpus are a straightforward replacement of the sacrifices that were offered at the Jerusalem Temple. For example, Bertil Gärtner, who, like me, recognizes “striking” resemblances between the Pauline and

5 Indeed, I would suggest that the theorization of the social formations that are the subject of these texts as Judean voluntary associations or soteriological initiation cults would allow for both productive redescription of these social formations and comparison between these and other Greco-Roman Mediterranean initiatory associations (so-called “mystery cults”). For a pioneering comparative study along these general lines, see Moshe Weinfeld, The Organizational Pattern and the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect: A Comparison with Guilds and Associations of the Hellenistic-Roman Period (NTOA 2; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1986).
Qumran theologies, argues that the religious practices of the Qumran community were functionally equivalent to the sacrifices of the Jerusalem temple, aside from their more “spiritual” character:

[The Qumran] community did not consider itself to have broken with the temple and the cultus in all its forms; instead, they transferred the whole complex of ideas from the Jerusalem temple to the community. This undoubtedly meant that some measure of “spiritualization” had taken place, since the idea of the temple was now linked with the community, and since the temple worship was now performed through the community’s observance of the Law through its own liturgy and cultus… The word [spiritualization] is used to indicate the transference of the concrete entity, the temple building, to a more “spiritual” realm in the living community, and of the sacrifices to deeds in the life lived according to the Law.

According to Gärtner, there is no disjuncture between the Qumran community and the Jerusalem Temple; the religious practices of the community have simply “replaced” the

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7 For similar conclusions, see Florentino García Martínez, “The Problem of Purity: The Qumran Solution,” in *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 139-157: “Once the break with the Temple had taken place, whose cult was considered profane and whose ministers are seen as impure, the community accommodates the rules of purity to its new situation. Its purpose is to safeguard the purity of the community. The community itself is seen as a substitute for the Temple” [157]; Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): “All that can be done under the present circumstances, until the real Temple is constituted, is to remove the offender, while the communal life of praise and perfection of the way substitutes for the purification sacrifice whereby the sanctuary, for now represented by the community, is cleansed” [46].

religiosity of the Jerusalem Temple through a process of “spiritualization.””\(^9\) This includes a replacement of the offering of sacrifices: “the true sacrifice is seen as being spiritual in character, offered in the holy and pure lives, the praise and the prayer of the members of the community.”\(^10\) According to Gärtner, the holiness, purity, and praise of the community provide a spiritual equivalent to the sacrifices of the Jerusalem cult. To my mind, however, the presence of priestly terminology and claims about the Jerusalem Temple in the Qumran texts does not indicate that the religious programs of the Qumran texts are straightforward replacements for participation in the Jerusalem Temple cult.

Gärtner is correct that practices of sanctification and purification are prominent in the Qumran and Pauline religious programs as well as in prescriptive texts pertaining to the sacrificial cult.\(^11\) In my reading, however, these practices do not serve the same ends as the regulations and practices aimed at the maintenance of holiness and purity at the Jerusalem Temple; hence, they should not be considered equivalent. I would suggest that in biblical priestly texts the maintenance of purity and sanctity is a prerequisite that enables favorable reciprocal exchanges with God and protects the special status of his property, whether temple implements, functionaries, or offerings. To the contrary, in the Qumran and Pauline materials sanctification and purification are elements of the process through which initiates are transformed in order to reconcile themselves with God and to

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9 Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 24, “the community has replaced the Jerusalem temple and its functions.”

10 Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 47.

11 Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 50, “Christians are the true temple of God, separate from non-believers. The image of the temple appears to have been used here as it was used in Qumran, to show that the ‘presence,’ Shekinah, of God had removed from the official Jerusalem temple to the ‘new’ people of God, the Christian Church.”
escape his judgments.\(^{12}\) I would further suggest that scholarly adherence to the categories, “Second Temple Judaism” (or “Judaisms”) and “Early Christianity” has precluded the theorization of differing modes of religiosity that might help to situate these differences.

Third, my approach to the social and eschatological content of the *Damascus Document* and the *Rule of the Community* differs in several respects from conventional scholarly approaches to these materials. For example, in a recent study, John J. Collins describes the social formations that are the subject of these texts as “voluntary association[s]” and “complementary branches of the same [sectarian] movement.”\(^{13}\)

Although several of Collins’ earlier works treat the “apocalyptic and messianic beliefs” of this sect in great detail,\(^ {14}\) Collins does not draw a direct association between such beliefs and the “multistage admission procedures” described in these texts.\(^ {15}\) In another recent study, Alison Schofield describes the social formation evidenced by the *Rule of the Community* primarily in terms of opposition to their “Jewish adversaries”:

The *Yahad* [“Community”] qualifies as a sect under a wider definition of a “sect,” as those who distinguish themselves from religious Other(s) through the setting of ideological boundary markers. In the case of the *Yahad*, they used such markers to set themselves up as foils to their Jewish adversaries, centered on their claims of truth (=unique revelation).\(^ {16}\)

\(^{12}\) Other scholars have taken this argument one step further, arguing that the practices of “atonement” advocated for in the Qumran texts were some manner of replacement for participation in the Temple cut. I have dealt with this position at length above, pp.109-111, 155-158. This approach does not consider that priestly texts assert that expiatory sacrifices might only rectify unintentional violations against sacra.

\(^{13}\) Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 6-7.

\(^{14}\) Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 10.

\(^{15}\) Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 5. See also John J. Collins, “The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Ed. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 74-90. Collins mentions eschatological war and messianism in his discussion of “the final salvation,” but not initiation into the covenant [86-88].

This continues a line of interpretation stemming from Albert Baumgarten, who categorizes the Community as “a voluntary association of protest which utilizes boundary marking mechanisms—the social means of differentiating between insiders and outsiders—to distinguish between its own members and those otherwise normally regarded as belonging to the same national or religious identity.”\textsuperscript{17} Although I agree with these descriptions in many respects, I find them somewhat incomplete. In my reading, our evidence is not exclusively preoccupied with sectarian opposition to the existing religious order; rather, I find many elements of a positive and innovative religious program that has been overlooked by scholars who seem preoccupied with Jewish sectarianism and traditionalist piety. In my view, it is not a coincidence or a matter of secondary importance that the texts in question argue on the one hand that God is preparing to bring some manner of calamitous eschatological judgment against humankind, and on the other that acquittal from this judgment and a host of other tangible benefits might be secured through initiation into these social formations.\textsuperscript{18} To my mind, this correspondence warrants treating the eschatological content of these texts as rhetoric in the service of their respective initiatory social-religious programs. This reorientation is supported by a great quantity of textual evidence and departs from existing theorizations of this material only slightly; its potential payoff, however, is significant.

\textsuperscript{18} I follow Susan Haber and Adele Reinhartz, \textit{They Shall Purify Themselves: Essays on Purity in Early Judaism} (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 47-71, in referring to the process of admission into the social formations discussed in the \textit{Rule of the Community} and the \textit{Damascus Document} by instruction and ceremony as “initiation.” Although many scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism do not employ this term, it is commonplace in scholarship dealing with other Greco-Roman religious associations of an initiatory nature (so-called Greco-Roman “mystery cults”). See, for example, Walter Burkert, \textit{Ancient Mystery Cults} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), which employs this terminology throughout.
I begin my treatment of the evidence with the *Damascus Document*, which employs technical forensic terminology to articulate God’s indictment of humans, especially the Israelites, in the introductory portion of the text: 19

Now listen, all who know justice (צדק) and understand the works of God, for he has a lawsuit (ריב) with all flesh and will bring judgment (ומשפט) against all who despise him, for, on account of their treachery (במועלם) by which they forsook him, he turned his face away from Israel and from his temple (וממקדשו; CD 1:1-3).

In response to their acts of treachery, God has withdrawn from the Israelites and the Jerusalem Temple, their locus for maintaining the human-divine reciprocal relationship. In my view, the statement that God has turned away from the Temple implies that he will not regard the sacrifices and other reciprocal gestures that the Israelites offer to him there. Indeed, many biblical passages employ a similar idiom to express the idea that God has rejected sacrifices offered to him. For example, Gen 4:5 states that Yahweh “did not regard (שעה) Cain’s tribute [offering].” Similarly, at Amos 5:22 Yahweh states, “I will not look upon (אביט) the sacrifice of your fatted cattle.” In Num 16:15, Moses enjoins Yahweh “not to face (תפן) the tribute [offering]” of the Korahites. Despite God’s turning away from Israel and the Temple, the relationship between these two parties has not been severed completely. Rather, God is preparing to bring suit against “those who despise him.” The term *rib*, “lawsuit” is employed frequently to refer to lawsuits in both religious and non-religious settings in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Gen 26:20-22; Num 20:13).

Prophetic texts employ this or verbal forms of the same root in describing both Yahweh

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19 4Q266 and 4Q268 preserve a highly fragmentary prologue to a version of this text. For the Hebrew texts with extensive reconstructions and commentary, see Ben Zion Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Reconstruction, Translation, and Commentary* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 56; Leiden, Brill 2007) 22-27, 109-140.
pleading Israel’s case (Jer 50:34) and bringing suit against Israel (Jer 2:9). Mic 6:2 furnishes a illustrative example: “Yahweh has a lawsuit (ריב) with his people, and he will plead [his case] with Israel.” In the Damascus Document, those who “know justice” are called upon to act as witnesses for God’s lawsuit. This manner of summoning witnesses also has precedents in prophetic texts (e.g., Isa 1:2; Jer 6:20; Mic 6:2). The Damascus Document, then, employs biblical forensic conceptions in formulating its indictment that serves as a pretext for its initiatory salvation offering. Although subsequent material in the Damascus Document focuses exclusively on the culpability of the Israelites in particular, this passage is directed against humankind in general (“all flesh”).

The Damascus Document asserts that forgiveness and escape from God’s judgments might be secured through initiation into the social formation and treaty relationship referred to as “the Covenant” and adherence to its religious regulations at several points in the text. The following passage articulates God’s capacities for both violent punishment and complete forgiveness in the context of initiation:

Now listen to me, all those entering the Covenant (ברית), and I will reveal to your ears the ways of the evil ones… [God] is slow to anger and very forgiving (סליחות), wiping clean [the slate] (לכפר) for those who return from transgression (פשע), but [there is] strength, might, and great wrath in flames by the hand of the angels of destruction for those who turn aside from the way and abhor the statute; there shall be nothing left and no escape for them (ופליטה; CD 2:2-7).

I have translated the verb kippēr in accordance with its basic meaning, “wipe clean, wipe away (some impurity or offense).” Here it appears to refer to the offenses committed by humans against God that are the content of God’s indictment of humankind. It bears

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20 Wacholder, New Damascus Document, 142, considers those who know justice to be “enlightened members who expect mysteries and revelations.”
21 CD 20:12 refers to “the new covenant” (ברית חדשות). This term appears in the Hebrew Bible only once (Jer 31:31).
reiterating that biblical instructions for expiatory sacrifices preclude the “wiping away” of this manner of culpable offenses by means any expiatory sacrifice (Lev 4-5, Num 15). This undermines the notion that initiation into the Covenant represents a replacement for participation in the Temple cult. The passage asserts that God is “very forgiving” and will wipe clean the reciprocal slate of these inexpiable offenses for those who “return from transgression.” I interpret this latter phrase as referring not to the reform of one’s behavior in some general sense, but to the adoption of the specific religious and ethical program of the text (the “statute[s]”). Indeed, this passage is directly addressed to new members of the social formation—“all those entering the covenant.” According to this sectarian text, adoption and adherence to the sectarian religious program results in divine forgiveness and salvation. It is noteworthy that the definite usage of the term “the covenant” appears to presuppose that the Sinaitic covenant between God and Israel is null and void. Hence, sectarian initiation is the only means of salvation. Those who “turn aside from the way,” which might refer to apostates from “the covenant” but more likely to non-initiate Israelites in general, will have no escape from God’s “angels of destruction” and his “great wrath in flames;” they will perish completely. Two fates are set forth: forgiveness or destruction. This scenario is remarkable for neither Josephus, nor Philo, nor Ben Sira, nor any other Second Temple source aside from the texts attested at Qumran and the Pauline epistles envisions this manner of eschatological judgment.

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22 It is nevertheless noteworthy that the Damascus Document devotes a great deal of its text to the matter of apostate members, who will receive particularly gruesome punishments from God (CD 8:1-19, 19:13-20:13).
Shedding light on the meaning of the phrase, “return from transgression,” the following passage associates God’s wiping clean of the slate of initiates with their acting in accordance with a specific interpretation of the Instruction of Moses:

As for all those who succeed them [the ancestors of the present Covenant], acting in accordance with the interpretation of the Instruction (תורה כפרוש) with which the first ones were instructed, until the completion of the period of these years: in accordance with the Covenant that God established with the first ones to clean [the slate] on account of their iniquities (עונותיהם על לכפר), so too shall he clean [the slate] (פרח) for their sake [i.e., those who come later] (CD 4:7-10).

The first members of the new Covenant were instructed, presumably by or through God, with a specific interpretation of the Instruction of Moses. It is significant that this text does not advocate merely acting in accordance with the Instruction of Moses but rather acting in accordance with a specific and likely proprietary reading of the Instruction of Moses. The Damascus Document contains numerous regulations for religious practices that are based upon a somewhat peculiar reading of certain biblical texts.23 This reading tends to harmonize biblical cultic texts from various sources (the Priestly, Holiness, and Deuteronomic sources) in a consistently stringent manner. These regulations, I suggest, are part of the “interpretation of the Instruction” referred to in this passage. Acting in accordance with this interpretation of the Instruction effects the wiping away of iniquities in the eyes of God. Those who do not act in accordance with these statutes and commandments of the Instruction of Moses will suffer a different fate:

As for all those who reject (המאסים) the commandments and the statutes, the evil ones, they will be repaid their recompense (גמול להשיב) when God visits the earth, when the word that is written by Zechariah the prophet comes about, “O Sword, rise up over the shepherds and over the mighty one close to me—an oracle of God—strike the shepherd and let the flock be scattered, and I will turn my hand to the little ones” (Zech 13:7). The ones who observe it [the commandments and statutes], they are the poor of the flock. They will escape (יבלו) at the time of the visitation, but the remainder will be handed over to the sword at the coming of the anointed one of Aaron and Israel (CD 19:5-11).²⁴

I suggest that the phrase “commandments and statutes” in the beginning of the passage refers to the proprietary interpretation of these regulations mentioned earlier (תורה פרוש; CD 4:8). Reciprocal terminology is central in this depiction of eschatological judgment. The noun “recompense” (גמול) may refer to reciprocal acts that are positive or negative, and in this case again refers to punishment. The verb that I have translated, “repay” (השיב) is a causative form of the root, “return” (שוב), which implies the reciprocal notion of returning a deed in kind. This passage makes plain that the recompense that God will repay to all those who have rejected his commandments is violent death. In contrast to those who reject God’s statutes, those who observe God’s instructions will “escape at the time of the visitation.” The notion of “escape” is significant; the ideal outcome here is not an abeyance of God’s anger or a resumption of ideal relations, but simply escape from violent punishment.

²⁴ I will not treat the issue of messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls here, but there is a massive bibliography on the topic. For a recent treatment, see Michael A. Knibb, “Apocalypticism and Messianism,” in The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 403-432.
As with initiation into other Greco-Roman voluntary organizations, “entering the covenant” to secure reconciliation with God involves swearing oaths. The extant text provides a few significant details about these oaths, although not their precise formulation. New initiates are to swear oaths on the pain of death: “the man shall swear [an oath] on his life to return to the Instruction of Moses for everything is explicated in it” (CD 16:1-2). Violation of this oath renders one liable for the death penalty: “If the judges cause him to swear [an oath] by the curses of the covenant: If he transgresses he is culpable, he shall confess and repent in order that he does not carry his offense and thereby die.” The subsequent text enjoins members of the covenant to initiate their sons when they come of age:

The one who enters the covenant of all Israel for an eternal rule shall have their sons, who have reached [the age] of crossing over into [the ranks] of the mustered, swear the oath of the covenant. This is the ruling for the whole time of evil for everyone who returns from his corrupt way: on the day that he speaks with the inspector for the many, they shall muster him with the oath of the covenant that Moses made with Israel, the covenant to return to the Instruction of Moses, with all [one’s] heart and all [one’s] soul, to that which has been discovered to do during the whole evil time (CD 15:3-15).

The oath derives from the time of Moses and is binding on the life of the initiate for all eternity. To my mind, these rather unlikely historical claims about the oaths support the

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26 Heb.: כיון אישה מעמש楼宇 לשון אל הרוח מתשמש כי בה כהל מצוקד.

27 The preceding material forbids employing the name of God to make an oath (CD 15:1-3).
hypothesis that the social formation is a novel, “revelatory,” initiatory movement, rather than a movement of pietistic or priestly protest. The presence of Deuteronomic locutions and references to Moses suggest that the initiatory oath may have contained elements of the treaty terms of the book of Deuteronomy. A preceding verse that prohibits initiates from swearing oaths aside from the oath sworn at their initiation strengthens the possibility of Deuteronomic content: “He shall not swear [an oath], except the oath of those who enter the curses of the covenant (הברית באלות הבאים השמות)” (CD 15:1-2). A variety of treaty curses within the covenant between God and Israel are elaborated at great length at Deut 28:15-69 and Deut 27:15-26. Indeed, the book of Deuteronomy presents itself as a treaty document between Yahweh and Israel; its enlistment as a framework for a novel initiatory oath is fascinating.

The Damascus Document asserts that initiation into and observance of the stipulations of the “new covenant” results in profound and tangible benefits. This includes, of course, “salvation,” escape from God’s judgments: “As for all of those who hold fast to these judgments (משפטים)… God will wipe clean [the slate] on their account (בעדם אל כפר), and they will look upon his salvation (בישועתו), for they took refuge in this holy name” (CD 20:27-34). Salvation comes by way of abiding by the religious program referred to and elaborated in the text (“holding fast to these judgments”) and entails God wiping clean the reciprocal slate of the person saved. A similar passage states, “salvation

28 Cf. Deut 6:5: “You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might.” On the cutting of the covenant between God and Israel, see Deut 5:1-3; 29:8-28.
(ישע) and vindication (צדק) to those who fear God” (CD 20:20). As I noted above, in addition to salvation, the Damascus Document associates several other tangible benefits with adherence to this religious program. The following passage, which recounts aspects of the early history of the covenant group, joins observance of the terms of the new covenant with glorious and eternal life:

God in his wondrous mysteries (ברית) wiped clean [the slate] (כפר) on account of their iniquity [i.e., the predecessors of the current social formation] and forgave (ישא) their transgressions. He built them a sure house in Israel, as has not stood another from the early days until now. As for those who hold fast to it, eternal life and all human glory are theirs (CD 3:18-20).

As for those who enter the “sure house” of the Covenant and “hold fast” to its instructions, God will wipe clean the slate on their account and reward them further with “eternal life and all human glory.” The phrase, “all human glory” might refer to all glory that does not trespass into the domain of God’s glory. The notion that God will reward those who adhere to the religious program of the Damascus Document with eternal life finds further support in the following passage: “As for all those who walk in these [statutes] in perfect holiness in accordance with all his chastisements the covenant of God (ברית) is an assurance (נאמנות) for them that he will make them live for thousands of generations” (CD 7:4-6).32 In my view, it is significant that some of our evidence for contemporaneous Greco-Roman initiatory religious programs also mentions the provision of a better afterlife.33 It is also significant that blessings of salvation and eternal life stand in contrast to the collective, this-worldly blessings that are

32 A similar assertion appears at CD 19:1 “[…] assurances to them to make them live for thousands of generations, as it is written: he observes the covenant and the loyalty to the one who loves [him] and to the ones that observe his commandments to the thousandth generation.”
33 This is the case with the Orphics, but not all initiatory movements. See Burkert, Ancient Mystery Cults, 23.
said to result from abiding by the Deuteronomic covenant, which include fruitful progeny, agricultural bounty, victory over enemies, and plentiful rainfall (Deut 28:1-14).

In addition to “eternal life” and “all human glory,” initiation into the covenant results in the freeing of the initiate from the influence of a malevolent divine being, Mastema: “On the day that the man swears [an oath] on his life to return to the Instruction of Moses, the angel Mastema will turn away from him, if he fulfills his words” (CD 16:5). That initiation results in the removal of Mastema’s control over the initiate would seem to suggest that non-initiates, perhaps all of them, are liable to his control.  

Although they do not mention Mastema by name, other passages in the Damascus Document suggest that in the present age Belial, who is perhaps to be equated with Mastema, has been granted control over humankind: “In all those years [until the completion of the present age] Belial is dispatched (משולח) to Israel” (CD 4:12-13). That Belial has been “dispatched” might indicated that God has sent him.

The Rule of the Community does not announce God’s indictment of humankind in the clear and explicit manner of the Damascus Document, but its depiction of the respective conditions and fates of those who are admitted into the social formation that is the subject of the document—“the Community” (היחד)—and those who are not appears to presuppose just such an indictment. This may be observed in the Rule of the

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34 But cf. CD 12:2, which treats possession by Belial as an exceptional state: “Any man whom the spirits of Belial rule and who speaks out of line in the manner of a medium shall be condemned.”

35 For the name “Mastema” and a discussion of the equation of Mastema with Belial in the War Scroll (1QM 13:4, 11), see Saul M. Olyan, A Thousand Thousands Served Him (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 66-67.

36 2 Cor 6:15 also mentions Belial[1].

37 For discussion of the various serekh manuscripts, including 1QS, and hypotheses about their textual development, see Sarianna Metso, The Serekh Texts (Library of Second Temple Studies 62; London: T&T Clark International, 2007).
Community’s instructions for the initiation of new members, which includes the priests’ recitation of God’s justness and the Levites’ recitation Israel’s culpability:\textsuperscript{38}

When [new members] cross over into the covenant (ברית בעוברם), the priests and Levites will bless God the Savior (ישוע אל) and all his true deeds and all those who cross into the covenant will say after them, “Amen, amen.” Then the priests shall recount the righteousness (צדקות, pl.) of God in his mighty deeds and they shall announce all [his] loyal compassion (חסדי) for Israel. The Levites shall recount all the iniquities of the Israelites and all their culpable acts of rebellion (פשעים) and their offenses (חטאות) during the reign of Belial (1QS 1:18-24).

As with the Damascus Document, admission into the social formation that is the focus of the Rule of the Community involves ceremony and instruction. Forensic terminology is central in the account of the current status of God’s relationship with Israel, which is a significant part of this instruction. God is just and mighty; in contrast, the Israelites are culpable, having committed offenses and acts of rebellion against God. That the present age is referred to as the “reign of Belial” marks another point of continuity with the Damascus Document. An earlier passage describes the current age as “the dominion of Belial” (מלמשלת בליעל; 1QS 1:18). The Hebrew word “righteousness” and related words derived from the same root (צדק) are not limited to moral-ethical contexts, but appear frequently in forensic contexts, where they mean “vindicated,” or “in the right.” For example, Lam 1:18 states, “Yahweh is righteous [in his judgment] (צדק), for my mouth rebelled [against him].”\textsuperscript{39} The phrase that I have translated as “culpable acts of rebellion” combines one of the most egregious kinds of offense one may commit against God (פשע; “rebellion”, e.g. Amos 1:3-2:6) with a term for liability or guilt (אשם). This passage, then, contains a tacit statement of indictment: God is in the right; the Israelites are guilty.

\textsuperscript{38} For discussion of initiatory and annual covenant renewal practices, see Metso, Serekh Texts, 24-26, 28-30.

\textsuperscript{39} For further examples, see Amos 5:12; Hab 1:4; Dan 9:14.
Further instructions for the admission of new members likewise presuppose something of a general indictment:

All those who cross into the covenant (ברית) shall confess (מודים) after them [i.e., the priests and Levites]: we committed iniquity (פשענו), we rebelled (פשענו), we acted wickedly (ҳרשננו), we and our ancestors (אבותינו) before us, by our walking [...]. Truthful and righteous (צדיק, אמת) is the God of Israel and his judgment (משפטו) against us and our ancestors, but he has rewarded us (гמל) with his compassionate loyalty (חסדו רחמי) forever and ever (1QS 1:24-2:1).

Like the previous passage, this one, too, employs forensic terminology in describing God’s justness in direct contrast to the culpability of this and preceding generations of Israelites, who have committed all manner of offenses against God. That all new initiates are to make this confession irrespective of their individual deeds suggests that God’s indictment extends to all non-initiates. Crossing over into the covenant not only addresses these misdeeds but also establishes an ideal and enduring relationship with God: the initiate will enjoy God’s compassionate loyalty for eternity. That “the priests” and “the Levites” feature prominently in these passages does not prove that the social formation originated as a priestly protest movement. The assignment of special roles for priests and Levites might reflect the employment of salient biblical categories for certain offices.

The Rule of the Community asserts that those for whom God has not wiped clean the slate will be subject to God’s anger and dire punishments. The following passage iterates a curse of “the lot of Belial,” which likely refers to non-initiates who are liable to the influence of this malevolent divine being:

The priests shall curse all the men of the lot of Belial (גורל בליעל), and they [i.e., the new members] shall say: you are cursed by all the wicked deeds of your

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40 For the Hebrew text with slight reconstructions, see James H. Charlesworth, ed., The Rule of the Community and Related Documents (The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 8.
culpability (אשמתך, רע, מעשי, בך;) may God give you over to terror at the hand of all the avengers of vengeance (נקמים נוקמים;). You are cursed without compassion in accordance with the darkness of your deeds; you are despised in the gloom of eternal fire. Let God not be favorable to you when you call out; let him not forgive thereby wiping away your iniquities (לכפר עוניך, מכולו, הכופר;). Let him raise the face of his anger to take vengeance upon you (לנקמתך אפו ישה;), let there be no peace for you (IQS 2:4-9).

The term, “the lot of Belial,” suggests some notion of predestination, as though people might draw either the lot of God or the lot of Belial.41 The presence of forensic terminology is again central; the lot of Belial are culpable for their wicked deeds, despite the apparent influence of this divine being. Reciprocal terminology is prominent, too. The curse formula enjoins God not to forgive the lot of Belial, but instead to consign them to “the avengers of vengeance,” to “repay” their evil deeds with “deeds of retribution.” Like Damascus Document, only two fates are depicted: forgiveness or destruction. This eschatology might reflect some level of social exclusivism.

The following passage describes the factors and agents that bring about the wiping clean of the reciprocal slate of the new initiate. This includes practices involving sprinkling water that effect the dual processes of purification and sanctification:

It is by the spirit of the true counsel of God (ליחד קדושה ברוח) in his faithfulness (באמתו) that he might be purified from his iniquities (יכופר עונותו, מכולו טהר). It is by an upright and humble spirit that his offense is wiped away (אני, הוא, תוכפור). It is by the humbling of his soul to all the statutes of God that his flesh is purified (嫒, טוהר, מידי נדה) by cleansing waters (אני, לתקדש במידי, נדה). His steps shall be made firm to walk in perfection in all the ways of God, as he commanded with respect to the appointed matters of his testimonies, not turning to the left or to the right, not transgressing a single one of all his words. Then he will be accepted (ירצה) with pleasing

expiation פְּנֵי יְהוָה in the presence of God and it shall become a covenant of the eternal Community” (1QS 3:6-19).

Some elements of this important and fascinating passage are somewhat unclear. Whether the first sentence above refers to the “spirit of the true counsel of God,” God’s revealed knowledge, or to “the spirit of the true council of God,” God’s advisory body, it appears that the spirit of this counsel or council takes an active role in wiping away the iniquities of the initiate in the eyes of God. That this results in the initiate’s ability to “see the light of life” might imply that this is the process that transforms the initiate into a “son of light.” There follows a statement that “the holy spirit of the community” also has a role in purifying the initiate of his iniquities. Whether this is a reference to an actual spirit or a metaphor for the religious program of the Community, it appears clear that some manner of external agency is involved. In contrast, the statement, “by an upright and humble spirit his offense is wiped away” implies that the contrite spirit of the initiate has an active role in expiating the offense. The following statement similarly presents the initiate’s humbling of himself to the statutes of the covenant as a prerequisite for receiving purifying and sanctifying waters.42 This might refer to water sprinkling that not only purifies the initiate, a notion that has a clear biblical pedigree (e.g., Ezek 36:25, Num 8:7), but also sanctifies him. This latter term suggests that the initiate has attained some quality of divinity or that he has become the special property of God (or both).43 Having been purified and sanctified, the new initiate is “accepted with pleasing expiation in the presence of God;” he is pleasing and acceptable to God like a sacrifice, which also

42 There is a massive bibliography on the topic of purity and impurity in the Dead Sea Scrolls. For a recent treatment of several influential scholarly approaches, see Haber, They Shall Purify Themselves, 47-71.
falls under the category of pure property that belongs to God. The phrase “pleasing expiation” combines an expiatory term (כפר) with one of the elements of the phrase “pleasing aroma” (ריח ניחח) to arrive at a novel combination of these concepts.44

As I have observed with the Damascus Document, initiation into the Community involves swearing oaths on the initiate's life to adhere to a specific interpretation of biblical texts:45

These are the protocol[s] of their ways, in accordance with these statutes, when they assemble as the Community: everyone who enters into the counsel [or, “council”] of the Community shall enter into the covenant of God before the eyes of all the volunteers. He shall affirm on his life by binding oath (אסר בשבת נשפתו על ויקם) to return to the Instruction of Moses (משה תורת), in accordance with all that he commanded, with all his heart and all his soul, with respect to all that has been revealed from it to the Zadokites, the priests who observe the covenant and seek his favor (זרויש דעונ; or “acceptance”) (1QS 5:7-9).

Entering the “counsel of the Community” and the covenant with God entails swearing oaths in the presence of the assembled Community and abiding by a “revealed,” Zadokite interpretation of the Instruction of Moses. Leadership roles are attributed to those of Zadokite lineage in both the Damascus Document and the Rule of the Community.46 The reference to other members of the Community as “volunteers” provides native terminological support for the categorization of this social formation as a kind of voluntary association.

Members are enjoined to separate themselves from non-members, who, by virtue of their having neglected the interpretation of the Instruction revealed to the members of the Community, are deserving of and subject to God’s vengeance:

44 Haber, They Shall Purify Themselves, 68, “The greater part of the text [of 1QS 3:4-9] is concerned with a concept that is entirely foreign to P: the purification of the soul.”
45 Hempel, “Community Structures,” 70-73.
46 Hempel, “Community Structures,” 82-83.
[The new member] shall affirm by the covenant on his life to separate from all the men of deceit (אשיש השקר), who walk in the way of wickedness, for they are not included in his covenant (בבריתו), for they did not seek or search for him through his statutes that they might know the hidden matters (הנסתרות) in which they err to their culpability (לאשמה), nor the revealed matters (והנגלות) that they treated with arrogance, thereby raising the anger of judgment (אף למשפט) and the bringing on vengeance (לנקום) by the curses of the covenant, bringing about great punishments (משפטים) that result in eternal destruction without remnant" (1QS 5:10-13).

This passage makes it clear that the men of deceit are non-initiates at large and not apostates or members of competing groups. As Sarianna Metso puts it, “[w]hile affirming the eternal validity of the covenant, the community considered itself as the only true keeper of the covenant, thus effectively excluding the rest of Israel.” By virtue of their not having sought the “hidden” and “revealed” matters of God, concerning which both the Damascus Document and the Rule of the Community claim extensive knowledge, non-initiates are not included in the covenant of God and are subject to his angry vengeance. Reciprocal and forensic terminology is yet again central prominent in this presentation: the “culpability” of non-initiates has prompted “vengeance by the curses of the covenant, bringing about great judgments;” they have provoked God’s anger and will suffer “eternal destruction.” A further passage summarizes this fate: “As for all those who despise [God], he will destroy them from the world” (1QS 5:19). Furthermore:

The punishment (פקודת) of all those who walk in [the spirit of deceit] is great affliction at the hand of all the angels of destruction, eternal devastation by the angry wrath of God, vengeance (נקמה) in continuous terror, endless shame with the disgrace of destruction in the fire of darkness, [etc.] until their destruction without remnant or escape (1QS 4:11-14).

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47 Metso, Serekh Texts, 24.
In contrast to the punishment of utter destruction, those who walk in the way of perfect holiness, abiding by the religious program of the Rule of the Community, achieve not only salvation but a host of other profound and tangible rewards from God:

The reward (תפודה) for all those who walk in [the path of perfect holiness]: healing, great peace in long life, fruitful offspring with every eternal blessing, everlasting joy in endless life, and a crown of glory with majestic raiment in eternal light (1QS 4:6-8).

God’s reward for initiates who adhere to the religious program includes not only escape from eternal destruction and the provision of eternal life, but also tangible, this-worldly benefits such as good health and fruitful progeny.48 In my opinion, the passages above evidence all of the trappings of a novel soteriological initiation cult. It seems unlikely to me that the movement was born in traditionalist, priestly protest to some aspect of the Jerusalem Temple’s priestly governance and then subsequently adopted all of the features of an initiation cult for good measure.

Like the Rule of the Community and the Damascus Document, the Pauline Epistles portray a scenario in which humans, especially Gentile humans, have committed egregious offenses against God, who, in response, has withdrawn from his relationship with them and is preparing to punish them on the “day of wrath”—at least those who have not been reconciled with God through the initiatory practices that Paul prescribes. Paul sets forth this indictment at greatest length in the epistle to the Romans, much of the

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48 The Rule of the Community associates those of the spirit of deceit not only with God’s angry punishment at the eschaton but also with a host of negative characteristics at the present time, including “prideful zeal for abominable works in a spirit of fornication, unclean ways in defiling worship, a tongue of blasphemy, [etc.]” (1QS 4 9-11). In contrast, the “sons of light” have exemplary characteristics: “These are their ways in the world: to enlighten the heart of man, to make level all the ways of true righteousness before him, to cause his heart to fear God’s judgments; a spirit of humility, slowness to anger, great compassion, eternal goodness, prudence, understanding, great wisdom, [etc.] zeal for righteous judgments [etc.] glorious purity [etc.] (1QS 4:2-6).”
first three chapters of which articulates the culpability of humans with respect to God’s judgments (Rom 1:18-3:20). ⁴⁹ According to Paul, the broken relationship between God and humans stems from a human refusal to recognize the power and divinity of God and their concomitant adoption of “idolatrous” religious practices:

The wrath of God (ὀργὴ θεοῦ) is revealed from heaven against all disrespect and wickedness of humans (ἀνθρώπων), those who wickedly restrain the truth, because the knowledge of God is manifest among them, for God made [it] manifest to them, for his unseen qualities, apprehended by the mind (νοούμενα), were seen distinctly from the creation of the universe by way of the things produced, [God’s unseen qualities being] his everlasting power and divinity, with the result that [humans] are without defense (ἀναπολογήτους), because knowing God they did not honor [him] (ἐδόξασαν) or give [him] thanks (ηὐχαρίστησαν) as God. Rather, they came to naught in their reasoning and their senseless heart was darkened. Asserting that they were wise they became foolish, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image of corruptible humankind, and of birds, beasts, and reptiles. Therefore, God surrendered them in the passions of their hearts to impurity, dishonoring their bodies among each other. These ones exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and they revered (ἐσεβάσθησαν) and served (ἐλάτρευσαν) the creation instead of the creator…

Just as they did not think fit to have God in [their] cognition, God surrendered them to an unfit mind, to do that which is improper… These ones, recognizing the judgment (δικαίωμα) of God—that the people who do such things deserve death (ἀξιοὶ θανάτου εἰςίν), not only do them but give their consent to those who do them (Rom 1:18-32).

God created the universe in such a way that his “everlasting power and divinity” was appreciable to humans and on which basis they ought to have revered him, honored him, served him, and rendered him gratitude. ⁵⁰ These latter items are noteworthy for four reasons. First, despite a degree of abstraction, these are all reciprocal social practices: if one reveres, honors, serves, or thanks someone else, whether a god or a human, this typically presupposes a relationship and entails some degree of goodwill in return on the part of the receiving party. Second, these social practices are not specific to Judean

⁵⁰ Fitzmyer, Romans, 271.
religion; to the contrary, they are a ubiquitous feature in much of our evidence for ancient religion (and modern religion as well). Third, as I have argued in the previous chapters, to some degree the offering of sacrifices constituted the “performance” or “expression” of these social practices according to conventions that were commonplace in ancient religiosity. Fourth, according to this presentation, performing these reciprocal social practices would have fulfilled the human side of their relationship with God. For Paul, then, the ideal relationship between humans and God could have been realized through practices of social reciprocity that were commonplace in ancient religion.

Instead of giving God his due, however, humans became foolish, serving and revering images of humans and other creations. Although the passage does not address “Gentiles” or “Greeks” directly, the accusation of “idolatry” implicitly directs the indictment against non-Judeans specifically. This feature of Paul’s program may have seemed distinctly “Judean” and perhaps “philosophical” to his Gentile addressees. According to Paul, the dishonor of idolatry angered God (“the anger of God is revealed from heaven”), with the result that God surrendered Gentile humans to the passions of their heart, which passions in turn impelled humans to commit defiling acts that are worthy of the penalty of death. The true source of human culpability, then, is not defiling behavior per se, but rather the failure to render God his due dignity, the punishment for which is the behavior that compounds this culpability. As with the Damascus Document and the Rule of the Community, forensic terminology is prominent: such people are subject to “the judgment of God” and liable to the penalty of death. As Joseph A.

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51 Fitzmyer, Romans, 270, “though Paul speaks only of ‘human beings’ … and never specifies ‘Gentiles’ or ‘Greeks,’ it becomes clear from 2:1 on (or at least from 2:9) that he has been thinking in this first subsection of non-Jewish humanity.”
Fitzmyer characterizes it, “Paul’s indictment of pagan humanity is severe.” This statement of indictment anticipates a means of acquittal.

A later verse in the same rhetorical unit indicates that God’s judgments will come to pass during a single day, “on the day that God judges (κρίνει) the secret matters of humans (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων)” (Rom 2:16). On this day people will receive rewards or punishments in accordance with their deeds:

In accordance with your [i.e., the rhetorical addressee’s] hardness and your unreformed (ἀμετανόητον; lit. “not changed of mind”) heart you store up wrath (ὀργή) for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of judgment of God (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκάλυψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ), who will repay (ἀποδώσει) everyone in accordance with their works (ἐγγα): to those who seek glory, honor, and incorruptibility by persistence in good work, [God will repay] eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον); to those who are selfish and unpersuaded by the truth, being persuaded by wickedness, [there will be] wrath and anger (ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός), affliction and difficulty upon the life of every human that does evil works (κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν), the Judean first and then the Greek, but there is glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good works (ἐργαζομένῳ τῷ ἄγαθῳ), the Judean first and also the Greek, for there is no partiality (προσωπολημψία; lit. “taking face”) with God (Rom 2:5-2:11).

Paul’s statement of indictment up to this point likely intends Gentile addressees, as the charge of idolatry applies specifically to them. Nevertheless, the scenario of eschatological judgment that Paul portrays is universal in character, including both Greeks and Judeans, for God is an impartial judge. The reciprocal aspect of this presentation is clear and explicit: God will “repay” people in accordance with their deeds. God will repay those who endeavor to do good works and who seek incorruptibility with “eternal life.” In contrast, God will repay those who are wicked with

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52 Fitzmyer, Romans, 271. I object to the term “Pagan.”
53 Fitzmyer, Romans, 312. Elsewhere Paul refers to “the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:1, 2; 2 Thess 2:2).
54 Fitzmyer, Romans, 301.
55 Fitzmyer, Romans, 302.
wrath and affliction.\textsuperscript{56} This statement of divine wrath anticipates a means of reconciliation.

The scenario of eschatological judgment is also described in the first and second epistles to the Thessalonians. Because the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians is disputed, I shall treat evidence drawn from that epistle independently of the evidence drawn from 1 Thessalonians, which, at any rate, I consider sufficient to support my claims.\textsuperscript{57} An early passage in this epistle draws an explicit association between serving “idols,” God’s wrath, and Jesus’ return from heaven:

You [Thessalonians] became an example for all those who are faithful in Macedonia and Achaia… [because] you turned to God from idols (εἰδώλων), to serve (δουλεύειν) a living and true God and to wait for his son from the heavens, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath (ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης; 1 Thess 1:7-10).

The Thessalonians have become exemplars of faithfulness to God for two reasons. First, they no longer serve idols, which practice is the ultimate source of God’s anger against humans, namely Gentile humans, according to the passage from Romans above.\textsuperscript{58} Second, the Thessalonians anticipate the arrival of Jesus to rescue them from God’s anger.\textsuperscript{59} This element of the passage corroborates my argument in the previous chapter that acknowledging God’s power that was manifested in raising Jesus from the dead is an

\textsuperscript{56} It is unclear whether these terms describe the manner or substance of God’s punishment. Fitzmyer, Romans, 302-303.

\textsuperscript{57} For consideration of arguments for and against the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians, see Abraham J. Malherbe, The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (Anchor Bible 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 349-374. Malherbe concludes: “The arguments against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians are not persuasive” [373].

\textsuperscript{58} Malherbe, Letters to the Thessalonians, 120: “Conversion from idols to God was for [Paul] much more than accepting a theological postulate about monotheism. The worshipper of idols has no knowledge of God or has rejected that knowledge and fallen into bondage to the idols, with dire moral consequences.”

\textsuperscript{59} 1 Cor 1:7 similarly describes the Corinthians as “eagerly awaiting (ἅπαξ ἐκείνους) the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
important aspect of the Pauline religious program—the equivalent to honoring God and the converse of serving idols. Paul describes “the coming wrath” in more detail in the following passage, which explicates the fate of initiates, those “in Christ,” who have died before the day of wrath:

We, the living, the ones who remain until the arrival of the Lord, will not precede those who are asleep, because the Lord, with a call in the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first, then we, the living, the ones who remain, will be carried away (ἁρπαγησόμεθα) together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus will we be together with the Lord forever (1 Thess 4:15-18).

On the day of wrath Jesus will first descend from heaven, then those initiated in Christ who have died will be resurrected, finally all initiates in Christ will be carried away together in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. An earlier passage adds the detail that Jesus will arrive “with all his holy ones” (3:13), perhaps a reference to some manner of angelic army.\textsuperscript{60} This passage leaves the fate of Judeans and Gentiles who have not been initiated in Christ unclear. A later passage that comments on the predestined salvation of Christ initiates might suggest that non-initiates have been predestined for God’s wrath: “God did not appoint us (ἐθέτο ἡμᾶς) for wrath, but rather for the acquisition of salvation (σωτηρίας) through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:9).\textsuperscript{61}

A similar eschatological scenario is described in somewhat greater detail in the following passage from 2 Thessalonians, which addresses the present trials and afflictions of the addressees:

We ourselves boast about you in the assemblies of God on account of your obedience and faithfulness throughout the harassment and affliction that you have undergone. This is evidence of the just verdict (δικαίας κρίσεως) of God, to the

\textsuperscript{60} Malherbe, \textit{Letters to the Thessalonians}, 214. Cf. 1 Cor 6:2: “the holy ones judge the world (οἱ ἅγιοι τῶν κόσμων κρίνωσιν).”

\textsuperscript{61} Malherbe, \textit{Letters to the Thessalonians}, 298-299.
end that you will be made worthy of the kingdom of God on account of that which you suffer. Since it is just (δίκαιον) for God to repay (ἀνταποδοῦναι; lit. “give back in return for”) those who afflict you with affliction, and [for God to repay] you who are afflicted with relief, with us [as well], at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in fiery flames, wreaking vengeance (διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν) on those who do not know God (τοῖς μὴ εἰδότοι θεόν) and those who do not heed the good news of the Lord Jesus. These ones will pay the penalty (δίκην τίσουσιν): eternal destruction (ὁλοθρενίων) from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes to be glorified among his holy ones and to be honored (θαυμασθῆναι) among all the faithful ones (τοῖς πιστεύσασι)—because our testimony to you was believed—on that day (2 Thess 1:4-10).

Here, too, reciprocal and forensic terminology is central and prominent. That the Thessalonians suffer affliction provides evidence of God’s justice: those who are afflicted will be rewarded for their faithfulness on the day of the Lord while those who afflict them will be subject to divine affliction. The idea that Gentile humans have become wholly alienated from God is corroborated by the assertion that God will wreak vengeance “on those who do not know God.”62 They do not know him, I suggest, because God surrendered their minds to the passions of their hearts after the insult of “idolatry.” The penalty for not knowing God and not heeding the good news of Christ’s resurrection is “eternal destruction.”

Heeding the “good news” of “the mystery of God” (1 Cor 2:1) is not merely a matter of intellectual assent, but requires initiation into the mysteries of a divine being—God’s son Jesus Christ—through practices of purification, sanctification, and spirit-transmission. The extant Pauline epistles do not contain a straightforward and comprehensive statement of what exactly this initiation entails, though many details emerge from diverse statements. The following passage, drawn again from 2 Thessalonians, states that salvation comes by means of sanctification by spirit:

62 For consideration of whom Paul has in mind, see Malherbe, Letters to the Thessalonians, 401.
God chose you [i.e., the Thessalonian addressees] for salvation (σωτηρίαν) from the beginning (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς) through sanctification by spirit (ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος) and faithfulness in [the] truth. To this end he summoned you through our good news, for the acquisition of the glory of our lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess 2:13-14).

Salvation comes by means of two procedures. First, faithfulness to the truth, which, in my view, requires assenting to the proposition that God raised Jesus from the dead and all that entails. Second, salvation comes by virtue of “sanctification by spirit.” This implies that the work of a spirit will change the nature of the initiate with the result that he or she becomes God’s property or takes on some quality of divinity. This is remarkably similar to the passage from the Rule of the Community discussed above.

The greatest source of information pertaining to initiation into Christ appears in the first and second epistles to the Corinthians. An important passage in 1 Corinthians connects the transformation of initiates with practices of sanctification, purification, and acquittal by means of Jesus’ name and God’s spirit: “Some of you were [idolaters, adulterers, thieves, etc.], but you were washed clean (ἀπελούσασθε), you were sanctified (ἡγιάσθητε), you were justified (ἐδικαιώθητε) by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). Christ initiates make amends for their prior misdeeds through purifying and sanctifying transformation rather than reciprocal reckoning, paying back to God the penalty owed. A later passage associates the “immersion” (“baptism”) of initiates with the receipt of an essence that they share not

63 Malherbe, Letters to the Thessalonians, 437.
64 1QS 3:6-19.
65 Rom 6-8 also contains a wealth of information on baptism and resurrection (esp. 6:3-10) and the spirit of God (esp. 8:9-17, 26-27)
66 Josephy A. Fitzmyer, First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (Anchor Yale Bible 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 258: “Three effects of the Christ-event are singled out: ‘washed,’ referring to baptism, the Christian rite by which the sinful status of the vices mentioned in vv. 9-10 is washed away; ‘sanctified,’ or made holy; ‘justified,’ or set in a right relationship with God, as in Rom 5:19. The three effects are simply mentioned with no chronological or logical order among them.”
only with God but with other initiates as well: “Just as the body is one but has many limbs… so is Christ, for in one spirit we were all immersed into one body (εἰς ἑν σῶμα ἑβαπτίσθηκεν) — whether Judeans or Greeks, slaves or free people — and we were all given one spirit to drink” (1Cor 12:12-13). The drinking of “one spirit” is somewhat unclear, it might refer to baptism or to the practice of drinking “Jesus’ blood,” which is referred to only once: “This cup is the new covenant (ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη) in my [Jesus’] blood. Do this, as often as you drink [it], as a memorial for me” (1 Cor 11:25).

After these practices of purification, sanctification, and acquittal, the spirit of God comes to reside inside the initiates, whose bodies thus become a temple of God: “Do you not know that you are a temple of God (ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστὶ) and that God’s spirit dwells in you (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ψυχῇ?” (1 Cor 6:17-19). Given that the body has become a temple of God it is imperative that initiates do not subject his

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67 Similarly, the Israelites were “immersed into Moses” (εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσαντο), “ate spiritual food” (πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον), and “drank spiritual drink” (πνευματικὸν ἐπίον πόμα) during the Exodus (1 Cor 10:2-4).
68 Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 479: “The latter is less likely because nowhere in the NT or early patristic writers is the Spirit ever said to be bestowed through the Eucharist.”
69 2 Cor 3:6 also employs the term, “the new covenant.”
70 Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 202-203: “Paul speaks of the indwelling Spirit as the animating presence of God in the midst of the Christian community, making it in a special sense the place where God is present to Christians in their corporate being…. Now the notion of God’s temple again emphasizes the oneness of the Christian community.”
71 See also, Rom 5:5: “God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through holy spirit that was given to us;” Rom 8:9: “the spirit of God resides in you (πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ψυχῇ);” Rom 8:11: “If the spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will make your mortal (θνητῶ) bodies live through his spirit that dwells within you;” Gal 3:2: “[Paul] only want to learn this from you, did you receive the spirit through works of the law or through faithful obedience?” Gal 4:6 “Because you are sons [of God], God sent the spirit of his son into your heart, crying, “Abba, father!”
spirit to defiling or profaning substances: “let us purify ourselves (καθαρίσωμεν) from every defilement (μολυσμοῦ) of body and of spirit, perfecting holiness (ἐπιτελοῦντες ἁγιωσύνην) in fear of God” (2 Cor 7:1). It is fascinating that Paul describes the effects of his initiatory program employing the imagery of temple inhabitation and purification.

In addition to effecting the initiate’s transformation and acquittal from God’s judgments, the indwelling spirit of God has the capacity to imbue initiates with various special skills and benefits of a tangible, this-worldly character:

To one [initiate] is given through the spirit wise reasoning, to another the knowledgeable reasoning in accordance with the same spirit, to another faithfulness by the same spirit, to another gifts of healing (χαρίσματα ιαμάτων) by the one spirit, to another wonderworking (ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων; lit., “works of powers”), to another fore-speaking (προφητεία; “prophecy”), to another the examination of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the decipherment of languages. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the spirit chooses (1 Cor 12:8-10).

The spirit of Christ allows initiates to perform various specialized skills. The Rule of the Community also associates a host of practical benefits, including healing, with walking in the path of perfect holiness prescribed in the text.

To conclude: above I have argued that there are numerous and significant points of continuity between the Pauline epistles and the two lengthiest charter documents of the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus on the related topics of eschatology and group initiation. Both of these sets of Judean texts argue that humans have committed culpable offenses against God, offenses of the sort that cannot be expiated through reciprocal-cultic acts, and that God will “repay” these offenses in a calamitous scenario of eschatological judgment. Escape from God’s judgments is available by means of initiation into the social formations that are the foci of these texts, which effects the cleaning of the reciprocal slate of the initiate, the transformation of the initiate through processes of purification and
sanctification, and other benefits such as eternal life and personality improvements. Thus, both corpora employ similar rhetoric in the service of similar social and religious programs. It is interesting to note that although these salvation schemes place humans at an initial deficit, the possible returns on their new relationship with God appear much higher than the returns associated with normal cultic-reciprocal interactions. Setting human-divine relations outside the typical arrangement—first for worse, then for the better—allows the authors of these texts to make extraordinary claims about what humans might receive on account of their initiations. I have also argued that consideration of this exceptional state of affairs helps to explain the relative lack of a place for the offering of sacrifices and other practices of human-divine reciprocity in the respective religious programs of these texts given contemporary conditions. This is not to say that either corpora evidences any opposition to the practice of sacrifice; they do not. Moreover, I have also briefly pointed to a few important points of continuity between the social and religious programs of these texts and other evidence for ancient Mediterranean initiatory associations concerning the swearing of oaths upon initiation and the provision of a better afterlife. I have not, however, argued for any manner of genetic connection between the Pauline and the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus, nor between the leaders who are referred to in these texts, nor the initiatory groups that are their subject, though this topic remains a fascinating avenue for future study.
CHAPTER EIGHT
Sacrifice and Religious Reciprocity in Tannaitic Rabbinic Texts

In this chapter I consider textual material pertaining to sacrifice that appears in the tannaitic rabbinic corpus, which includes, by most scholarly accounts, the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and three midrash collections—Sifra to Leviticus, Sife to Deuteronomy, and the Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael.¹ The dating of both the content and the redaction of these texts is a notoriously difficult problem in the field of rabbinics. Most contemporary scholars date the tannaitic corpus in a rather imprecise manner to the third century C.E., with the Mishnah usually considered the earliest of the Tannaitic compositions.² It is therefore important to state that my arguments here do not depend upon a specific dating of the tannaitic corpus; it is sufficient for my own purposes that these texts post-date the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by a relatively large margin, approximately 150-250 years. Even given this wide historical span, tannaitic texts provide our earliest extensive body of evidence for one variety of post-Temple Judean religiosity.

The tannaitic corpus is vast and contains abundant material that approaches the topic of sacrifice—among hundreds of other topics—from a variety of angles. Tannaitic

texts contain several historicizing narratives of sacrificial practices as they ostensibly took place at the Jerusalem Temple, an abundance of intellectual jurisprudence pertaining to the fulfillment of sacrificial obligations, and homiletical exegeses of sacrificial terms and practices. The quantity of the combined tannaitic material on sacrifice—especially the juristic material—is too vast for comprehensive treatment in a single chapter. In addition, the topic of sacrifice in rabbinic texts has not received dedicated scholarly attention in the form of either an article or book chapter, let alone a manuscript. Hence, my goal in this chapter is to support my particular arguments on the topics of sacrifice and religious reciprocity rather than to provide a comprehensive study of all tannaitic texts pertaining to sacrifice, a task that remains a scholarly desideratum.

I will argue that tannaitic texts express no criticism or discomfort with the practice of sacrifice; to the contrary, the tannaitic corpus presents approving descriptions of the slaughter and butchering of sacrificial offerings, statements of reverence for the sacrificial service of the Temple, entreaties that the Temple service be restored hastily, and “homiletic” texts that comment favorably upon the efficacy of offering sacrifices in relation to God. Nevertheless, I will also argue that tannaitic texts are remarkable in that they do not treat the offering of sacrifices as a preeminent means of participating in reciprocal relations with God, and they seldom comment upon the transactional aspect of the practice as do the various “Temple-era” Judean sources I have treated earlier.

3 Cohn, Memory of the Temple, 4, refers to these as “Temple ritual narrative[s].”
5 By homiletic I mean they present non-legal interpretations of biblical terms and practices. I do not assume that this homiletic material was intended for synagogue instruction. See, Lapin, Rabbis as Romans, 41.
That rabbinic texts do not treat sacrifice as a preeminent means of engaging in reciprocal relations with God does not derive from a more general rejection or overlooking of the concept of religious reciprocity on the part of the tannaitic rabbis. To the contrary, various tannaitic texts contain numerous statements that articulate and endorse religious reciprocity explicitly. The particular manner of religious reciprocity advocated for in these texts differs, however, from that of the material examined earlier in this study. I have argued that Temple-era texts generally treat sacrifices as pleasing favors that might accompany requests of God or tokens of gratitude that respond to God’s beneficence in such matters as agriculture and healing. These favors might be acceptable to God if the human offerer has otherwise upheld the obligations and expectations owing to his side of the human-divine relationship. According to tannaitic texts, on the other hand, human-divine reciprocity principally involves performing meritorious deeds and practices that bring about a corresponding reward (שכר) from God or Heaven directly. The practices and deeds that render a human deserving of a divine reward that figure most prominently in the tannaitic corpus are the study of the Instruction and rabbinic teachings (תורה תלמוד), the fulfillment or performance of biblical commandments (מצות) as interpreted by the rabbis, and the performance of meritorious acts (מעשה) such as charitable giving. To my mind, this suite of practices and its coordination with this conception of individualized merit reciprocity constitute elements of a relatively novel type of religiosity that has little precedent in biblical or other Second Temple period texts. In order to substantiate these claims, the second part of this chapter will consider

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6 This position accords generally with the approach of Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans*, 39, who argues that the rabbis were an innovative cultural movement: “Rabbis were not simply the faithful representatives of the people who labored mightily to protect Judaism from the onslaught of Roman political and cultural dominance. Rabbis also invented and perpetuated new forms of
texts that contain assertions about religious reciprocity, even though these texts do not deal with sacrifice directly.

Following my respective treatments of the tannaitic approaches to sacrifice and to religious reciprocity generally, I analyze two midrashic texts that assert that the offering of sacrifices does occasion a divine reward, but only insofar as the offering fulfills a biblical commandment. I conclude with a suggestion that in the rabbinic model the offering of sacrifices is indeed pleasing to God, but only to the extent that it represents the fulfillment of a biblical commandment or some other religious obligation that is incumbent upon an Israelite, particularly a male Israelite.

My focus in this chapter—rabbinic religiosity—has received relatively little attention in contemporary scholarship in the field of rabbinics.\(^7\) In my view, scholars have devoted more attention to other, equally important topics such as the pre-history and emergence of the rabbis,\(^8\) the social position of the rabbis in wider Judean/Roman-provincial society,\(^9\) rabbinic self-understanding and identity construction,\(^10\) and relations between rabbis and early Christians.\(^11\) One of my goals in the present chapter is to

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\(^7\) For a pioneering study, see Michael L. Satlow, “Fruit and the Fruit of Fruit: Charity and Piety among Jews in Late Antique Palestine,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100.2 (2010): 244-277. Satlow examines not only “rabbinic spirituality” [244], but also “‘common’ or ‘popular’ Jewish piety in relationship to that of the rabbis” [245]. Although Satlow’s historical focus is somewhat later than my own, I consider his work exemplary. See also Jacob Neusner, “‘From Mishnaic Philosophy to Talmudic Religion: The Transformation of Judaism between 200 and 400 AD,’” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 58 (1990): 633–651.


examine rabbinic assumptions and assertions about how people might interact with the
God of Israel, and more specifically, which practices or deeds he might reward or
punish.\textsuperscript{12} This chapter is of relevance to the wider aims of the present study because it
helps to account for the displacement of the social-reciprocal understanding of the
practice of sacrifice in post-Temple Judean/Jewish religiosity—especially rabbinic
religiosity—which displacement has warranted the present study. While a detailed
examination of the later history of rabbinic understandings of sacrifice is beyond the
scope of the present chapter, I would tentatively suggest that the tannaitic approach to
sacrifice, which treats the practice as an intellectual-juristic and exegetical matter of the
ideal yet bygone past, became commonplace in later rabbinic religiosities.\textsuperscript{13}

I begin my treatment of the evidence with three relatively lengthy narratives in
the Mishnah that describe, respectively, the offering of the perpetual sacrifice (𝘁ﬀ rumours), the
sacrifices of the Day of Expiation (הכﬀorum), and the presentation of first-fruits (בזים הבכﬀorum)
at the Jerusalem Temple.\textsuperscript{14} These narratives are noteworthy for the fact that they describe
neither the participation, nor the presence, nor the pleasure of God in the sacrificial
process, nor, for that matter, any effect that the sacrifices might have with respect to the

\textsuperscript{12} I follow the approach of Satlow, “Fruit and the Fruit of Fruit,” 245: “I will argue that at least
some Palestinian Jews in Late Antiquity… believed that God directly and materially rewarded
those who gave to or acted charitably toward poor people (e.g., almsgiving). While elements of
this understanding can be found in earlier Jewish literature, including the Hebrew Bible, the form
it took among Palestinian Jews was both new and distinctively late antique.”

\textsuperscript{13} See Neusner, \textit{A History of the Mishnaic Law of Holy Things I}, 1–3, for a summary of
Maimonides’s account of the Israelite sacrificial system, which proceeds from the rules of the
Mishnah.

\textsuperscript{14} The Tosefta does not contain analogues to any of these narratives.
The lengthiest of these narratives describes the rites of the twice-daily offering of yearling lambs as ascending offerings at the Jerusalem Temple, which appears in the eponymous tractate *Tamid* (“Perpetual Offering”). This narrative text appears to incorporate details from at least three biblical sources: two sets of prescriptions for the perpetual offering (Ex 29:38-42, Num 28:2-8) and the Chronicler’s narrative of Hezekiah’s reestablishment of “the service of the Temple of Yahweh” (עבידה בית יהוה) after his cleansing of the Temple (2 Chr 29: 15-36). The more substantial of the two prescriptive texts is Num 28: 2-8:

Command the Israelites and say to them: as for my offerings (קרבני), my food (לחם), the offerings of my pleasing aroma (ריח אשי), be careful to offer [it] to me at its appointed time. You, [Moses,] shall say to them: this is the offering (אשה) that you shall offer to Yahweh, two yearling lambs without blemish (תמימם), daily (תמיד עלת). The first lamb you shall offer in the morning; the second lamb you shall offer at dusk [with] a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as tribute, mixed with a quarter-hin of beaten oil. It is a perpetual ascending offering, offered at Mt. Sinai, for a pleasing aroma, an offering for Yahweh. Its libation is a quarter-hin for the first lamb. Pour out the libation of liquor for Yahweh in the holy place. As for the second lamb, offer it at dusk. Offer it with tribute as in the morning and the libation, an offering of pleasing aroma for Yahweh (ליהוה ניחח ריח אשה).

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15 This is also true of another narrative passage in tractate *Pesahim* (“Passover Sacrifices”) which describes the manner in which the Israelites offered their Passover sacrifices (פסחים): “An Israelite slaughtered [his Passover sacrifice] and a priest took the blood and passed it to his associate, [who passed it] to his associate, and he received a full [vessel] and passed back an empty [vessel]. The priest closest to the altar sprinkled it in a single sprinkling against the base [of the altar]” (Passover 5:6). See Cohn, *Memory of the Temple*, 75-78.

16 Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Holy Things V*, 147, writes of tractate *Tamid*: “Nothing in our Order [Holy Things], and little enough in the whole of Mishnah prepares us for the distinctive character, both literary and substantive, of the present tractate and its immediate successor. For instead of a collection of rules, together with controversies thereon, we now come to what is essentially a narrative...[which] tells how the morning-part of the [perpetual offering] rite was carried out.” Tractate *Tamid* does not appear in the Tosefta.

17 These three texts are considered exilic or early post-exilic compositions. Earlier sources refer to the type of sacrifice that was offered daily to Yahweh as “tribute” (מנחה) rather than as a “perpetual ascending offering” (תמיד עלת).
The first section of this passage introduces the more general category of food-offerings of pleasing aroma for Yahweh, of which the perpetual offering is the first item. The instructions for this manner of type of sacrifice are relatively straightforward: offer two lambs as ascending offerings daily, one in the morning and one at dusk, along with attendant offerings of grain and wine—presumably to complete the meal—in order to produce a pleasing aroma for Yahweh. The other prescriptive text, Ex 29: 38-42, adds only one significant yet predictable detail, that the perpetual offering is to be offered at the door of the tent of meeting, “where Yahweh will meet you to speak with you there” (Ex 29:42). The Chronicler’s narrative describes Hezekiah’s offering of ascending offerings—not perpetual ascending offerings specifically—but its details about the singing, trumpeting, and prostrations that accompany the offering appear to have been integrated into the Mishnah’s account of the perpetual offering:

Hezekiah said to offer the ascending offering on the altar. When the ascending offering began, the song of Yahweh and the trumpets also began, at the direction of the instruments of David, king of Israel. All the assembly (הקהל) were prostrating themselves (משתחוים), and the singer was singing (משורר), and the trumpets were blasting, all this until the ascending offering was completed (2 Chr 29:27-28).

The Mishnah’s narrative account of the perpetual offering combines features of both the Chronicler’s narrative and the two prescriptive texts with numerous other details that do not have a clear biblical basis. These non-biblical details might derive from historical or historicizing reports of the practices of the Jerusalem Temple, from the imagination of the

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18 Ex 29:38-42: “This is what you shall offer (תעשה) on the altar: two yearling lambs daily (ליום), perpetually (תמיד). The first lamb you shall offer in the morning; the second you shall offer at dusk. With the first lamb [you shall offer] a tenth [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with a quarter-hin of beaten oil, and a quarter-hin of wine as a libation. As for the second lamb, offer it at dusk. Offer it with the tribute [i.e., the offering of fine flour] and the libation of the morning for a pleasing aroma, an offering for Yahweh (ליהוה). It is a perpetual ascending offering throughout your generations at the door of the tent of meeting in the presence of Yahweh, who will meet with you there to speak to you there.” Both this and Num 28 are Priestly texts.
authors of this text, or some combination of the two.¹⁹ I provide an abridged version of this lengthy narrative below, skipping over certain details that I consider non-essential:

The officer [of the priests; הממונה] said to [the priests]: “Go out and see if the time for slaughtering has arrived.” … [3:3] If it had arrived, he would say, “Daylight!” (ברקאי.) [The inspector] said to them, “Go bring the lamb from the chamber of lambs.”… [3:4] They entered the chamber of vessels and brought out 93 vessels of silver and gold. They watered the perpetual offering [lamb] with a vessel of gold. Although it had been inspected at night, they inspected it [again] by torchlight. [The priest] who won [the lot to slaughter] the perpetual offering would drag it (משכו) to the shambles. [The priests] who won [the lots for] the limbs followed after him. … [4:1] They did not tie down (כופתין) the lamb but only bound it (מעקדין). The [priests] who won [the lots for] the limbs seized [the lamb]… The slaughterer slaughtered, and the collector collected [the blood], and he came to the north-eastern horn (קרן) of the altar and [sprinkled] to the east and to the north, [then he went to the] south-western [horn] and [sprinkled] to the west and to the south…. [4:2] [The slaughterer] would not break its leg, but rather would pierce it through its knee and hang it [on a hook]. He would split it downward until he reached the breast. When he reached the breast he severed the head and gave it to [the priest] who won [the lot for the head]. He severed the legs and gave them to [the priests] who won them. [There follow many details about the butchering of the lamb]…. [7:3] When the high-priest decided to incinerate it, he would ascend the ramp with the prefect [of the priests] (הסגן) to his right… The first priest passed the head and the hind-legs [to the high-priest], and he laid his hands on them and threw them [onto the altar flames]. The second priest then passed the fore-legs to the first priest, and he gave them to the high-priest, and he laid his hands on them and threw them [into the altar flames]. The second priest departed, and like so they would pass the remainder of the limbs [to the high-priest], and he would lay hands upon them and throw them [into the altar flames]… Then they would give him wine for the libation… They blew a prolonged, a wavering, and [another] prolonged trumpet blast… When [the high-priest] bowed (שחה) to pour the libation the prefect waved his flag, Ben Arza clashed the cymbal, and the Levites broke into song. When they reached a break [in the singing] they would blow a trumpet blast and the people would bow low (הנグラ נגד). At every break [in the singing] there was a trumpet blast, and at every blast prostration. This was the ritual (סדר; lit. “order”) of the perpetual offering for the service of the Temple of our God (לשהות בית אלהינו). May it be [his] will that it will be rebuilt quickly, in our days, amen.

The narrative begins before the break of dawn, when the officer who manages the priests on duty at the Temple dispatches a priest to watch for the sunrise, at which point the

¹⁹ Cohn, Memory of the Temple, 2.
priests would bring a lamb and the silver and gold vessels (or instruments) required to perform the rite from their respective chambers in the Temple complex. Elements of the narrative such as the watering of the lamb from a vessel of gold, the second inspection of the lamb by torchlight, and the distribution of priestly duties by lot have no biblical basis and add a sense of verisimilitude and ceremony. The description of the slaughter and butchering of the lamb does not shy from the bloody details of the rite. The priest who wins the lot to slaughter the lamb drags it to the shambles, where it is bound but not tied down (presumably a larger animal such a bull would be tied down). The priest slaughters the lamb and another collects its blood to on the sides of the altar. Details such as the directions of the sprinkling of lamb’s blood and the precise steps of its butchering display a concern with the minutia and order of the rite. Whereas modern depictions of sacrificial practice tend to dwell on the death of the animal, the Mishnah’s portrayal does not even mention it. The high-priest enters the narrative when he decides to offer the limbs of the animal on the altar, at which point he and the prefect of the priests ascend the altar. The priests who won the lots for the individual limbs would pass the limbs along to the high-priest, who would lay his hands on them before tossing them into the altar flames. After incinerating the lamb, the high priest would pour a libation at the altar. The prefect would then wave a flag, Ben Arza—apparently the conductor of the Levites—would clash his cymbals, and the Levites would break into song. During breaks in the Levites’ singing, there would be trumpet blasts and those present (“the people”) would bow low. The

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20 Cohn, *Memory of the Temple*, 10, 15.
21 It is clear in this narrative the redactors of this tractate did not understand the hand-laying right as conveying sin to the individual parts of the lamb.
22 *M. Sheqalim* 5:1 mentions that Ben Arza was the officer of the cymbal (צלצל). Neusner, *History of the Mishnaic Law of Holy Things VI*, 200, claims Ben Arza “occupied [his position] in the very last days of the temple.”
narrative concludes with a fascinating statement that the account above provides “the order of the daily offering” and a prayer that God reestablish the Temple service hastily.

Several observations might be drawn from this narrative. First, the authors of the tractate and the redactors of the Mishnah apparently wished to see the practice of sacrifice restored at the Jerusalem Temple, which suggests that they did not view their movement as being hostile or inimical toward the Temple, the priesthood, or the sacrificial service. Second, insofar as the creation and later possession of this text suggests and entails the possession of intimate knowledge of the Temple service—far exceeding that which might be derived from biblical texts—the authors and tradents of the Mishnah might have considered themselves the curators of the knowledge of the priestly practices of the Second Temple. Third, the narrative employs both simple past and past habitual verbs, which, in conjunction with other elements of the narrative, suggest that it describes an ideal and continuous period of the bygone past. Fourth, the narrative does not mention God except for the statement, “This was the order of the perpetual offering for the service of the temple of our God.” This stands in contrast to the biblical prescriptions for the perpetual offering, in which there are frequent statements that the offering is intended for Yahweh and to produce a pleasing aroma for him. This omission also stands in contrast to another Temple-era source that describes the high-priest offering a perpetual ascending offering, Sir 50:11b-21.

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23 Cohn, *Memory of the Temple*, 3: “In writing or talking about the Temple and its rituals, the rabbis who created the Mishnah were arguing for their authority over post-destruction Judean law and ritual practice. They were asserting that their own tradition was correct and that all Judeans would follow their dictates.”

When [Simon the high-priest] ascended the altar of majesty, he honored the holy courtyard. When he received the pieces [of the sacrifice] from the hands of his brothers [the priests], as he stood beside the hearth of the altar he was surrounded by a wreath of brothers… all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and all [Yahweh’s] offerings were in their hands, in front of all the assembly of Israel. Upon finishing the altar service, arranging the hearth of the Most High, the sons of Aaron blew their trumpets. They trumpeted and made a mighty sound as a reminder in the presence of the Most High. Then everybody together hastened and fell with their faces to the ground to make obeisance before the Most High, before the Holy One of Israel. Then the singer gave his voice, and in the tumult they arranged his lantern. All the people sang out in prayer before the Merciful One, until the completion of the altar service… then he descended and raised his hands over the whole assembly of Israel, and the blessing of [Yahweh] was on his lips, he rejoiced in the name of [Yahweh].

The similarities between this passage and that of Tamid are so numerous that it is quite possible that the authors of Tamid may have had a Hebrew or Greek version of this text when they prepared their own version. Nevertheless, this account differs from that of Tamid in mentioning that the offerings, music, and praise are offered in the presence of Yahweh. Moreover, the statement that the trumpet blasting is intended to produce a “reminder in the presence of the Most High” indicates that the practices aim to foster human-divine interaction. The text from Tamid, however, does not mention either God or human efforts to interact with God at any point in the narrative.

The next narrative text that I will consider is the description of the sacrifices of the Day of Expiation (יוֹם הָכְפֹּרָה) in the Mishnah’s tractate Yoma (“The Day”). The narratives that describe these sacrifices are embedded in a much longer narrative account

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25 Heb. Ms. B does not have Gk. v. 15: “he reached out his hand for a cup and poured out the blood of the grape as a libation; he poured out at the base of the altar a pleasing aroma (ὀσμήν εἰπωδίας) for the Most High King.”
26 Ms. B.
27 For fragmentary Hebrew texts, see Pancratius C. Beentjes, The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of all Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Ben Sira Texts (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997).
of the various expiatory practices prescribed for the day.\textsuperscript{28} The biblical prescriptions for these rites appear in Lev 16, which I have already treated in some detail.\textsuperscript{29} The first of the sacrifices that the tractate describes is the daily perpetual offering, which is also offered on holidays:

They spread a linen sheet between [the high-priest] and the people. He disrobed, descended, and immersed, then ascended and dried himself. They brought him clothing of gold, then he dressed and sanctified his hands and feet.\textsuperscript{30} They brought him the perpetual sacrifice. He made an incision (קרצו) and another completed the slaughtering on his behalf. He took the blood and sprinkled it. He entered to burn the morning incense and to trim (הטיב) the lamps, and to offer the head and the limbs, and the cakes and the wine (Yoma 3:4).

In contrast to ordinary perpetual offerings, the high-priest himself makes the incision to kill the lamb, though the butchering of the lamb is left to another priest. In abbreviated fashion, the text reports that the high-priest would offer the head and limbs of the lamb with the attendant offerings of grain and wine after burning incense and trimming the lamps. In the next section of the narrative, the high-priest sacrifices a bull in order to expiate his and his household’s offenses and transgressions:

\begin{quote}
[3:8] [The high-priest] came to his bull,\textsuperscript{31} and the bull would be standing between the porch and the altar…. He laid two hands upon it and would make a confession (מתודה). He would say: I pray, [Yahweh] (lit. “the name”), I have transgressed, I have rebelled, I have committed offense before you, I and my household, I pray, [Yahweh], expiate (כפר) the transgressions, acts of rebellion, and offenses that I have committed before you, I and my household, as it is written in the Instruction of Moses, your servant, “For on this day he shall expiate on your behalf, etc.” (Lev 16:30). They responded after him: Blessed is his name, the glory of his kingdom forever and ever…. [4:2] He came to his bull a second time and he
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28} For analysis of this narrative, see Cohn, \textit{Memory of the Temple}, 66-71.
\textsuperscript{29} See pp.180-182. I treated the Greek version of this passage.
\textsuperscript{30} On the purification of hands and feet in a laver, see \textit{Tamid} 1:4, Ex 30:17.
\textsuperscript{31} The biblical prescriptions for the Day of Expiation refer to Aaron’s bull as an offense/purification offering (חטאת) on numerous occasions (Lev 16:3, 6, 9, 11, 27), and the goat of the people as an offense/purification offering (Lev 26: 5, 9, 15, 27), yet the Mishnah here refers to these only as “his bull” and “the goat.”
placed his hands on it and would make a confession….

[4:3] He slaughtered it and received its blood in a mixing bowl and gave it to someone who would stir it… in order that it would not congeal…..

[5:3] He took the blood from the one who was stirring it. He entered the place that he had entered [previously to burn incense, 5:1] and stood in the place where he stood, and sprinkled [the blood] once upward and seven times downward. He would not intend to sprinkle it high or low, but rather [the motion was] like [cracking] a whip. He used to count thus: one, one and one, one and two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six, one and seven. He came out and set [the bowl] on the golden stand in the hall.

[5:4] They brought him the goat [for the people] (Lev 16:15). He slaughtered it and collected its blood in a mixing bowl…. [5:7] Every action of the Day of Expiation has been stated in order (סדר על הארור), if one action precedes another [the high-priest] has accomplished nothing (כלוםעשהלא…)

[6:1] He sprinkled the cleared surface of the altar seven times, and he would pour out the remainder of the blood on the western base of the outer altar, and the [remainder of that] he would pour at the southern base of the outer altar. These would mingle in the channel and go out into Wadi Kidron. It was sold as fertilizer to gardeners, and [rules for sacred property] apply to it.

It is noteworthy that this passage describes the high-priest making a confession over his bull and even provides the content of the confession, whereas Lev 16 prescribes that confession be made only over the goat that is to be released live into the wilderness (Lev 16:21). The content of this confession is nearly identical to the prescriptions for the confession over the live goat. The explicit quotation of Lev 16:30 within the confession strikes me as historically unlikely. I would suggest that this confession and its scriptural quotation reflect a rabbinic tendency to interpolate texts into sacrificial practices. It is

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32 The confession is nearly identical to that of Yoma 3:8, aside from the addition of “the sons of Aaron, your holy people,” and a longer quotation of Lev 16:30: “He would say: I pray, [Yahweh] (lit. “the name”), I have transgressed, I have rebelled, I have committed offense before you, I and my household and the sons of Aaron, your holy people. I pray, [Yahweh], expiate the transgressions, acts of rebellion, and offenses that I have committed before you, I and my household and the sons of Aaron, your holy people, as it is written in the Instruction of Moses, your servant: ‘For on this day he shall expiate on your behalf in order to purify you from all your offenses before [Yahweh] that you might be clean’ (Lev 16:30). They responded after him: Blessed is his name, the glory of his kingdom forever and ever.”

33 Lev 16:21: “Aaron shall lay his two hands on the head of the living goat, and he shall confess over it all of the transgressions of the Israelites, and all of the acts of rebellion, and all of their offenses. He shall put them on the head of the living goat and send it way by means of an appointed man into the wilderness.”
noteworthy that the method for the sprinkling of the blood receives detailed attention yet there is no attempt to describe how the sprinkling effects the purification of the sanctuary or the expiation of transgressions. The assertion that if one ritual action precedes another, no expiation has taken place makes explicit the rabbinic emphasis on detail.\(^{34}\)

The final narrative text that I will consider in this section is the depiction of the offering of first-fruits—token portions of the earliest or choicest agricultural produce of the growing season—at the Jerusalem Temple, in tractate Bikkurim (“First-fruits”).\(^{35}\) First-fruits constituted a salient class of offerings in Judah and elsewhere in the ancient world.\(^{36}\)

The primary biblical prescriptions for this practice appear at Deut 26: 1-11:\(^{37}\)

> When you come to the land that Yahweh your god is giving to you as an inheritance, possess it and dwell in it. You shall take of the first of all of the fruit of the land (מַרְאֶשֶׁת כָּל הַאדָמָה), which you shall bring from your land, which Yahweh your god is giving to you, and you shall put it in a basket. You shall go to the place where Yahweh will choose for his name to reside. You shall come to the priest that will be there in those days and say to him, “I declare on this day to Yahweh your god that I have come to the land that Yahweh swore to give to our ancestors.” The priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it before the altar of Yahweh your god. You shall respond and say in the presence of Yahweh your god, “My father was a wandering Aramean….” Now, I have brought the first of the fruits of the land that you gave to me, Yahweh.” You shall set them before Yahweh your god and prostrate yourself before Yahweh your god.

\(^{34}\) Cohn, Memory of the Temple, 66: “The whole plot, the series of ritual actions that take place in the Temple, is leading toward ritual success. Ritual success, which is ensured by performing the ritual correctly, is the telos, the end or purpose, of the narrative to which all events must ultimately lead.”

\(^{35}\) For analysis of this passage, see Cohn, Memory of the Temple, 3-8.

\(^{36}\) First-fruits are a common feature of Greek religion as well. See, Jon Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy, 78.

\(^{37}\) Ex 23:19a and Ex 34:26a present the brief prescription: “As for the finest of the first-fruits of your land (רָשָׁתָן בָּאָמֶר אָדָמָה), offer these at the Temple of Yahweh your god.” See also Lev 23:10, Ezek 44:30.

\(^{38}\) “He went down to Egypt, few in number, and he became a great nation, strong and numerous. But the Egyptians were bad to us, and afflicted us, and they gave us difficult work. We cried to Yahweh, god of our ancestors, and Yahweh heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression. Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an out-stretched arm, and with great awesomeness, and with signs and wonders. He brought us to this place, and he gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”
In my reading, this passage describes the reciprocal return of a token portion of the agricultural bounty of the land that Yahweh has provided: Yahweh has given and so you shall give.\textsuperscript{39} It is interesting that the reciprocal dimension of this passage focuses exclusively on the land rather than the bounty itself. The Mishnah’s account of the offering of first-fruits does not mention or comment upon the reciprocal dimension of the practice (\textit{Bikkurim} 3:2-6):

How do they bring up the first-fruits (בכורים)? [People of] all of the cities that are in the \textit{ma’amad}\textsuperscript{40} enter the [chief] city of the \textit{ma’amad}, they spend the night in the square of the town, and they would not enter the houses of the town. In the early morning the officer [of the \textit{ma’amad}] would say, “Arise, let us go up to Zion, to [Yahweh] our God” (Jer 31:5). Those near [to Jerusalem] would bring (קדש) figs and grapes; those distant would bring dried figs and raisins. The bull would go before them [pulling a cart with the first-fruits], and its horns would be gilded in gold with an olive wreath on its head. A flute played before them until they approached (מענין) Jerusalem. When they approached (מענין) they sent [messengers] before them, and they prepared the first-fruits. The administrators (הפחות), and the prefects, and the treasurers [of the Temple] would go out (יצא) to meet them—they would go out in accordance to the honor of those who were entering. All of the artisans of Jerusalem would stand before them and greet them: Brothers, men of such-and-such place, come in peace! The flute played before them until they arrived at the Temple Mount. When they arrived at the Temple Mount, even king Agrippa would carry (נוזל) the basket on his shoulder and enter, until he arrived at the court, and the Levites would recite in song, “I will exalt you, [Yahweh], for you have raised me up, and you have not allowed my enemies to rejoice over me” (Ps 30:2). The pigeons that were on the baskets would be [offered as] ascending offerings, and whatever they had in their hands they gave over to the priests. While the basket was still on his shoulder, he would recite from, “I declare on this day to [Yahweh] your God” (Deut 26:3) until he finished the section. Rabbi Judah says: until “My father was a wandering Aramean” (Deut 26:5). When he reached, “My father was a wandering Aramean,” he would take the basket from his shoulder and hold it by its edges, and a priest would set his hand on it and wave it, and he would recite from, “My father was a wandering Aramean,” (Deut 26:5) until he finished the section. He would set it beside the altar, prostate himself, and exit.

\textsuperscript{39} Deut 28:1-12 asserts that if the Israelites comply with the terms of the covenant, then agricultural bounty will be among the numerous blessings that Yahweh will provide.

\textsuperscript{40} In rabbinic texts, these are geographical units that correspond to the 24 priestly orders who sequentially share the duties and prerogatives of the conduct of the Temple’s sacrificial practices.
According to this narrative, the pilgrims of a priestly geographical district (ma’amad) would meet in the chief town of that district and spend the night in the town’s square. The interpolation of these priestly districts into the practice of offering first-fruits has no biblical or other Second Temple-era precedent and may be a rabbinic innovation. The pilgrims would rise early the next morning and the priestly officer of the ma’amad would recite the verse, “Arise, let us go up to Zion, to [Yahweh] our God” (Jer 31:5). This is likely another instance of the rabbinic tendency to interpolate scriptural texts into their accounts of Temple-era practices. The description of the bull bedecked with gilded horns and an olive wreath and the flute player leading the way imbue the narrative with a festive and celebratory tenor. When the pilgrims would reach Jerusalem, they would be met by Temple functionaries and greeted by residents of the city. Upon reaching the Temple Mount, the pilgrims would take their baskets onto their shoulders and carry them toward the altar, Levites would sing Ps 30, and pigeons would be offered as ascending offerings. The text marks some disagreement on the protocols for the declaration from Deut 26. Rabbi Judah’s opinion—that the pilgrim stops reciting until a priest waves the basket before the altar—is apparently accepted as authoritative. After waving the basket, which likely indicates the transference of the first-fruits from human to divine ownership, the pilgrim prostrates himself and goes on his way.

This narrative makes especially frequent use of participles and the past-habitual tense, along with the perfect tense, which suggests that the practices described took place
during a continuous period of the past. Like the previous narratives, it makes no mention of God aside from the content of the scriptural passages. I find it remarkable that the narrative does not comment on the reciprocal dimension of the practice, God’s ownership or reception of the first-fruits, or the efficacy of the offering. This contrasts with Temple-era sources such as the following account of Philo:

> It is commanded that everyone shall contribute (εἰσφέρειν) first-fruits (ἀπαρχὰς) beginning at the age of twenty. These contributions are called, “ransom (λύτρα),” on which account they make the first-fruits with great zeal, beaming with joy and rejoicing, for with the payment (καταθέσει) they expect either freedom from slavery or cures for diseases to be found, and steadfast liberty at the same time, and security (σωτηρίαν) in every harvest (καρποῦσθαι) (Special Laws 1.77).

According to Philo, who was a contemporary of the Jerusalem Temple, those who offer first-fruits expect the divine provision of tangible blessings—freedom from slavery, healing from diseases, and security in future undertakings. Philo concludes his description of the offering of first-fruits with the observation that “the hopes of the pious rest in these lawful first-fruits” (Special Laws 1.77). The rabbinic narrative, on the other hand, sets forth the details of the practice without any comment on its anticipated effects or the blessings it might yield.

Whereas the narratives above are rather exceptional not only in the Mishnah but also in the entire tannaitic corpus, the “juristic” material that I will now consider in the following section of this chapter is commonplace. The Mishnah contains a plethora of “juristic” assertions and opinions that set forth, debate, and interrogate the parameters of

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41 Cohn, Memory of the Temple, 7: “the extensive mixing of the different tenses, unique to this type of passage, blends the subtle nuances of the three different tenses, giving the sense that these events took place in the past and that they took place regularly, adding a feeling of immanence, and implying that what took place was the law, in an abstract sense.” “Overall, the shifting between tenses seems to give multiple shadings to the narrative as a whole: that the ritual occurred regularly and repeatedly in the past; that it is timeless; and that it should or must be performed in a certain way. It may even make the telling more engaging” [8].

42 Cohn, Memory of the Temple, 1-2.
biblically based sacrificial regulations. More specifically, the Mishnah’s juristic material on sacrifice interrogates the circumstances (e.g., the three pilgrimage festivals) and posits hypothetical situations (e.g., the commission of unintentional violations of biblical commandments) that render an Israeliite individual or collectivity obligated (חייב) to offer sacrifices. In addition, this juristic material establishes parameters concerning the quality and quantity of sacrificial materials that might satisfy such individual or collective obligations. These parameters sometimes have a tenuous biblical basis or no biblical basis whatsoever. Finally, the Mishnah’s juristic material pertaining to sacrifice considers problematic situations that might render an otherwise satisfactory sacrifice “valid” (כשר) or “invalid” (פסול) in discharging such obligations (e.g., the discovery that a priest’s mother was a divorcée or that he possesses a disqualifying blemish). I provide examples from the Mishnah of each of these kinds of juristic-sacrificial material below, as well as corresponding passages from the Tosefta in footnotes.

43 My characterization of this material as “juristic” accords with recent scholarly theorizations of the tannaitic rabbis as circles of highly-literate, Roman provincial jurists—not judges—that have much in common with other Roman jurist-intellectuals in terms of their social location and modus operandi. Martin Goodman, State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132-212 (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001 [1983]), 127, “The relation of the rabbis to the courts is easily explicable in terms of the relation of iurisprudentes (jurists) to a legal system. Not unlike contemporary lawyers such as Ulpian from nearby Tyre, the rabbis spent their time codifying the law as they saw it, inventing problems to solve according to the principles they evolved from these laws, adding a strong element of what they would like the laws to be, and making the results known to the non-academic public.” See also the recent treatment in Cohn, Memory of the Temple, 17-37; Hannah M. Cotton, “Jewish Jurisdiction under Roman Rule: Prolegomena,” in Zwischen den Reichen: Neues Testament und Römische Herrschaft (Ed. Michael Labahn and Jürgen Zangenberg; Tübingen: Francke, 2002), 13-28.


45 The Tosefta, which by and large follows the same topical arrangement as the Mishnah, comments upon, supplements, and occasionally disputes the Mishnah’s juristic positions. I employ the text of Saul Lieberman, The Tosefta: According to Codex Vienna, with Variants from Codex Erfurt, Genizah Mss. and Editio Princps (Venice 1521) (4 vols.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2001-2007) [Hebrew].
I begin my treatment of the juristic material with three passages from the Mishnah’s tractate *Hagigah* (“Festival Offering”), which is primarily concerned with explicating the Pentateuch’s repeated dual injunctions that, first, all male Israelites are to “appear” (יראה) before Yahweh three times a year at the three pilgrimage festivals, and, second, that they are not to appear “empty-handed” (ריקם). The first passage of the tractate delineates the kinds of people for whom the obligation is binding and those for whom it is not:

All [Israelites] are obligated ( обязין) in the matter of appearance (בראיה) except deaf people, mentally disabled people, minors, people of undefined sex (מתומם), androgynes, women, slaves who have not been freed, lame people, blind people, sick people, aged people, and those who cannot go up [to the Temple] on their feet. Who is a minor [with respect to this regulation]? One who cannot ride on his father’s shoulders to ascend from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount—the words of the House of Shammai. The House of Hillel say: One who cannot hold his father’s hand to ascend from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount, as it is said, “three pilgrimage festivals” (רגלים, lit: “feet” Ex 23:14; *m. Hag 1:1*).

The obligation to appear at the Jerusalem Temple for the three pilgrimage festivals in order to offer sacrifices is incumbent upon free Israelites of sound body and mind who have unambiguously male sexual organs and gender. Male children are obligated when they are old enough to ride on their father’s shoulder (Shammai) or to hold their father’s hand for the short walk from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount. The terminology and enumeration of these particular social categories and their application to Pentateuchal

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46 Knowledge of the biblical passages that provide the legal principles that inform the rabbinic juristic material is presumed and not quoted explicitly. The relevant biblical passages are: Ex 23:14: “You shall celebrate (תחג) three pilgrimage festivals (רגלים, lit: “feet”) for me in the year.” Ex 23:17 “Three times a year every one of your males shall appear (יראה) before lord Yahweh.” Ex 34:23: “Three times a year every one of your males shall appear before lord Yahweh, god of Israel.” Deut 16:16a “Three times a year every one of your males shall appear before Yahweh your God in the place that he will choose—the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles.” See also Lev 23:37 and Num 10:10.

47 Ex 23:15b “They shall not appear before me empty-handed (ならない היד ריקם)” Deut 16:16b: “No one shall appear before Yahweh empty-handed.”
commandments is a hallmark of Roman-era rabbinic jurisprudence that has little in the way of biblical precedent.\(^{48}\) Having defined the social parameters of the biblical obligation, the following passage provides guidelines as to the type and minimal value of the sacrificial offerings by which a male Israelite might discharge his obligations:

The House of Shammasi say: The appearance [offering] (ׂראה) is to be [worth] two [ma‘ahs] of silver and the festival [offering] one ma‘ah of silver.\(^{49}\) The House of Hillel say: The appearance [offering] is to be one ma‘ah of silver and the festival [offering] two (m. Hag 1:2).

This passage attributes two stylistically parallel rulings to the archetypal and semi-legendary schools of Hillel and Shammasi.\(^{50}\) There is no biblical basis for either the monetary values of the offerings or for the bifurcation of the commandment not to appear empty-handed into “appearance” and “festival” offerings, terms which appear to be rabbinic neologisms. A further passage, m. Hag 1:5, provides partial clarification as to what these terms entail, as well as which of the two positions the anonymous redactors of the Mishnah have adopted as authoritative:

One for whom there are many who eat but few possessions may offer (מביא) many šelamim sacrifices and few ascending offerings. [One for whom there are] many possessions and few who eat may offer many ascending offerings and few šelamim sacrifices. If both are few, this is the one for whom it is said: one ma‘ah of silver and two [ma‘ahs] of silver. If both are many, this is the one for whom it is said, “A man’s gift is to be in proportion to the blessing that [Yahweh] your god has given to you” (Deut 16:17).

A male Israelite who has little wealth but has traveled to Jerusalem for one of the festivals with a large retinue—presumably composed of relatives and servants—may offer relatively more šelamim sacrifices, which provide meat for the offerer, and

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\(^{49}\) A maah is 1/12 of a shekel by weight.

relatively fewer ascending offerings, the meat from which is to be incinerated on the altar. The arrangement and terminology of the passage imply that the appearance offerings and festival offerings of the previous passage correspond to ascending offerings and śēlamim sacrifices.\textsuperscript{51} The next section of the passage states the inverse of the first position: one who is wealthy but has few mouths to feed may offer relatively more ascending offerings and relatively fewer śēlamim sacrifices. The content of this statement might reflect stylistic parallelism with the previous statement, but it also suggests that a wealthy person’s money would be well-spent on ascending offerings just as a poorer person’s money would be well-spent on śēlamim sacrifices. The third section of the passage follows the stylistic pattern of the previous statements. One who is poor and has few mouths to feed might satisfy his obligations by offering sacrifices worth one and two maaḥṭs of silver respectively, perhaps put toward less expensive offerings like pigeons or doves. This statement implies that the earlier passage (\textit{m. Hag} 1:2) provides guidelines for the minimal fulfillment of the biblical obligation. The ordering of the values of this statement (one and two) is consistent with that of the House of Hillel from the previous verse, which suggests that the redactors of the Mishnah accept the position associated

\textsuperscript{51} This the position of the Tosefta, which provides an interesting addendum to this section: “The House of Shammai say: the quantity of the appearance offering is greater than the quantity of the festival offering. The whole appearance offering is for the Most High, which is not the case for the festival offering. The House of Hillel say: the quantity of the festival offering is greater than the quantity of the appearance offering. The festival offering was practiced (נוהגת) before and after the revelation [at Sinai] (Ex 5:1), which is not the case with the appearance offering. Three commandments are practiced at a pilgrimage festival (רغال): the appearance offering, the festival offering, and rejoicing. The whole appearance offering is for the most high, which is not the case with the other two. The festival offering was practiced before and after the revelation, which is not the case with the other two. Rejoicing is practiced with men and with women, and it is practiced for the whole week, which is not the case with the other two. What is the appearance offering? These are the ascending offerings that are offered as an appearance offering. What is the festival offering? These are the śēlamim sacrifices that are offered as a festival offering. If one is capable of offering from [the resources] of his own household, he offers thus; if not, he joins with his brothers, provided that he does offers the required amount” (\textit{t. Hagigah} 1:4; Lieberman v.2 375-376).
with the House of Hillel, as is the case in the Tosefta. The final statement of the passage likewise follows the stylistic form of the previous three statements, commenting upon a person who has many mouths to feed and great wealth. The content of the statement is a direct quotation of Deut 16:17, which is noteworthy for two reasons. First, this verse follows one of the biblical verses that establishes the obligation to appear before Yahweh at the pilgrimage festivals (Deut 16:16), implying that textual proximity may have been a factor for the inclusion of Deut 16:17 in the present passage. Second, Deut 16:17 clearly articulates a core principle of human-divine reciprocity: one should give gifts to Yahweh that correspond to the divine gifts that he has provided. The text does not comment further on this passage.

In addition to setting qualitative and quantitative guidelines pertaining to the offerings by which an Israelite might discharge his sacrificial obligations, the Mishnah also delineates circumstances that might render a given sacrifice “invalid” (פסול) or “valid” (כשר) during the process of its offering and consumption. According to rabbinic texts, an invalid sacrifice is to be disposed of without sprinkling its blood at the base of the altar, incinerating its sacrificial portions on the altar, or eating the edible portions of its meat.52 The following passage from tractate Pesahim (“Passover Sacrifices”) discusses the theoretical issue of a Passover sacrifice that has been sacrificed under an improper designation:

The Passover sacrifice (הפסח) that is slaughtered but not under its proper designation (לשמו; lit: “in its name”), and [the priest] receives, conveys, and sprinkles [its blood] but not under its proper designation, or under its proper designation and then not under its proper designation, or not under its proper designation and then under its proper designation, is invalid (פסול). How might it be under its proper designation and then not under its proper designation? Under

52 See, m. Zebahim (“Slain-offerings”) 2:1-5.
the designation of a Passover offering and then under the designation of a šelamim sacrifice. [How might it be] not under its proper designation and then under its proper designation? Under the designation of a šelamim sacrifice and then under the designation of a Passover sacrifice (m. Pes 5:2).\(^{53}\)

This passage divides the offering of a Passover sacrifice into three sequential components, its slaughter in the Temple court, the conveyance of its blood to the altar of ascending offerings by priests, and the sprinkling of its blood at the base of the altar. If at any point in the process the erstwhile Passover sacrifice is designated a šelamim sacrifice, the sacrifice becomes “invalid;” it does not satisfy the obligation of its owner(s) and must be disposed of forthwith. The following passage of the Mishnah discusses a similarly theoretical issue of a Passover sacrifice that has been sacrificed for those who cannot or will not consume its meat:

[The Passover sacrifice] that is slaughtered for those who do not eat it, or for those that are not included [in the purchase of the sacrifice], for the uncircumcised, or for the unclean is invalid (טסילר). [The Passover sacrifice that is slaughtered] for those who eat it and those who do not, for those who are included and those who are not, for the circumcised and the uncircumcised, for the unclean and the clean is valid (כשר). [The Passover sacrifice] that is slaughtered before midday is invalid, for it is said, “at dusk (הערבים בין)” (Ex 12:6). [The Passover sacrifice] that is slaughtered before the [dusk] perpetual sacrifice (לתמיד чемיד) is valid, provided that one stirs (ממרס) its blood until [the priest] sprinkles the blood of the perpetual sacrifice, but if it was sprinkled [before] it [remains] valid (כשר; m. Pes 5:3).

A Passover sacrifice that has been sacrificed expressly for those who are prohibited from eating it or for those who will not eat it is invalid, whereas one that is sacrificed for a mixed group remains “valid” (כשר) for consumption and for the satisfaction of the

\(^{53}\) See also m. Zebahim 1:1: “All slain offerings that are not slaughtered under their designation are valid (כשרים) but they do not satisfy the obligation (חובה) of their owners, aside from a Passover sacrifice and an offense/purification sacrifice [which become invalid]."
Likewise, a Passover sacrifice becomes invalid if sacrificed at midday, whereas one sacrificed at dusk is valid even if it precedes the daily sacrifice, which is likewise to be sacrificed “at dusk” (בְּעוֹרָה; Ex 29:38). The application of the binary terms “valid” and “invalid” to sacrificial offerings has no precedent in prescriptive biblical cultic texts, which commonly employ the reciprocal terms “acceptable” (נרצה; e.g., Lev 1:3-4) and “not acceptable” (ירצה לא; e.g., Lev 7:18-19) when referring to situations and conditions that might render a sacrifice unfit for offering or consumption. I suggest that this innovative terminology and the set of analytic questions in which it is embedded is illustrative of the Tannaitic approach to sacrifice, which tends to treat the offering of sacrifices as the formalistic discharging of biblical obligations rather than the offering of pleasing favors to God.

I provide one further example of the Mishnah’s tendency to posit scenarios that might render sacrifices “valid” or “invalid.” The following passage from tractate Terumoth (“contributions”) considers the effect that the disqualification of an officiating priest might have on the status of the sacrificial service that he has performed:

[A priest] was on duty and offering [sacrifices] (ומקריב והקריב) at the altar, and it became known that he was the son of a divorcée or a ḡaluṣah: Rabbi Eliezer says: all the offerings that he offered at the altar are invalid (פסולים). Rabbi Joshua declares them valid (כשרים). It became known that he has a blemish (נום): his service is invalid (פסולה) (раб”י; m. Ter 8:1).

This passage presumes knowledge of Lev 21:17, which prohibits priests from marrying divorcées, among other classes of women. In rabbinic Hebrew a ḡaluṣah is a woman who has performed the shoe removing ceremony to annul her obligation to contract levirate

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54 The Tosefta disputes this position: “Abba Saul [declares the Passover sacrifice of a mixed group] invalid (דהני נמק), and logic dictates (נתן מהלך) that it is invalid, the time invalidates and the uncircumcised person invalidates” (t. Pisha 4:2; Lieberman v.2 159).
marriage with the brother of her deceased husband (Deut 25:5-10). Rabbinic texts treat such a woman as a divorcée. The text then presents two named opinions that disagree on the status of the offerings, with one declaring them invalid and another declaring them valid. No resolution is provided. The second part of the passage takes up the issue of a priest who is discovered to possess a “blemish” (מום) such as blindness or lameness (Lev 21:17-23) while he was offering sacrifices. In this case the Mishnah provides a clear resolution: the offerings of a blemished priest are invalid.

Whereas the passages above deal with non-expiatory sacrifices, the Mishnah also provides instructions for situations that obligate the offering of expiatory sacrifices, such as the following passage from tractate Niddah (“The Menstruant”):

[In the case that blood] was discovered on him [after sexual intercourse], both [the man and the woman] are unclean and liable for an offering (קרבן חיבין). [In the case that blood] was discovered on her immediately afterward, both are unclean and liable for an offering. [In the case that blood] was discovered afterward, their uncleanness is in doubt (מספק) and they are exempt (פטורים) from the offering (m. Nid 2:2).

This passage addresses the discovery of blood on genital areas after sexual intercourse. The text presupposes knowledge of the prohibition against having sex during a woman’s menstrual period.55 If blood is discovered on the man or the woman immediately after they have sex, they are liable for an offense/purification offering in order to remedy the inadvertent violation of a biblical commandment and his contraction of impurity. If blood is discovered at some point afterwards, the two are “exempt” from making the offering, as it is unclear whether the blood was present at the time of intercourse. This juristic approach to the offering of expiatory sacrifices is in keeping with the material concerning non-expiatory sacrifices above.

There are hundreds of further examples of juristic texts dealing with sacrificial matters in the Mishnah and Tosefta; limitations of time and space, however, dictate that I move on to the next section of the chapter. As a concluding observation, I would suggest that if the three narratives above treat the offering of sacrifices as rituals to be performed, this manner of juristic material defines and debates the precise parameters for the proper performance of such rituals.

I will now examine a selection of tannaitic midrashic texts involving sacrifice. Some of these texts present juristic material that is similar or identical to that of the Mishnah and Tosefta; that is, they discuss situations that obligate the offering of sacrifices, guidelines for the quantity and quality of offerings that might satisfy these obligations, and circumstances that might render the sacrifices valid or invalid. This material differs from the juristic material of the Mishnah and Tosefta only in the respect that it appears in the line-by-line commentary to the biblical verses that ostensibly provide the basis for a given ruling or procedure rather than in topically-arranged tractates. The second kind of discourse that I will treat in this section is “homiletical” material that interprets, comments upon, or draws a comparison to some non-legal facet of sacrificial practices or terminology. Midrashic texts also depict rabbis swearing oaths
by the Temple service,\textsuperscript{56} sacrificial regulations that were in force at the Second Temple,\textsuperscript{57} and idiosyncratic happenings at the Jerusalem Temple,\textsuperscript{58} but in my view such texts do not require detailed treatment here.

Above I have analyzed the Mishnah’s expansive treatment of the biblical obligations to appear before Yahweh and not to appear empty-handed in tractate \textit{Hagigah}. Tannaitic midrash collections interpolate some of juristic material in their respective comments to two of the biblical texts that provide the basis for the obligation, Ex 23:15 and Deut 16:16. The latter verse is commented upon in \textit{Sifre}, which provides

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{56} E.g., Rabbi Tarfon said, “I swear by the [Temple] service that there is no-one in this generation who is able to rebuke.” Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah said, “I swear by the [Temple] service that there is no-one in this generation who is able to receive a rebuke.” Rabbi Akiba said, “I swear by the [Temple] service that there is no-one in this generation who knows how to rebuke” (\textit{Sifra Qedoshim Perek} 4; Koleditzky vol. 2 84; Neusner vol. 3 109). I have employed the text of Shachne Koleditzky, ed., \textit{Sifra or Torat Kohanim and Commentary by Rabbenu Hillel ben R. Eliakin} (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Hatchiya Printing Press, 1961), which relies on the Oxford and Vienna mss. I have also consulted the critical edition of Louis Finkelstein, \textit{Sifra on Leviticus: According to Vatican Manuscript Assemani 66} (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1983), which unfortunately covers only the first two tractates of \textit{Sifra} (Lev 1-5). I have consulted the translations of Jacob Neusner, trans., \textit{Sifra: An Analytical Translation} (3 vols.; Brown Judaic Studies 138-140; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); Howard L. Apothaker, \textit{Sifra, Diburra de Sinai: Rhetorical Formulae, Literary Structures, and Legal Traditions} (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2003) [Tractates \textit{Behar} and \textit{BeHuqotai} (Lev 25-27)].
  \item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{Dibura Denedabah Perek} 8; Koleditzky vol. 1 17; Neusner vol. 1 131-132.
  \item \textsuperscript{57} E.g., “Rabbi Yose said: I have heard with respect to the one who slaughters the perpetual offering (ךלמיה) on the Sabbath that if it was not inspected, he is liable for (יהיה) an offense/purification offering and he offers another perpetual offering” (\textit{Sifra Dibura Denedabah Parashah} 3; Koleditzky vol. 1 7; Neusner vol. 1 93).
  \item \textsuperscript{58} E.g., “Rabbi Yose said: Abba Eliezer said to me: We had a calf for a šělāmîm sacrifice. They brought it out to the women’s courtyard and the women laid hands [on its head]. Is there [valid] laying [of hands] in the women’s courtyard? [No.] Rather, it was for the enjoyment (רוח נחת) of the women” (\textit{Sifra Dibura Denedabah Parashah} 2; Koleditzky vol. 1 3; Neusner vol.1 77).
\end{itemize}
line-by-line commentary to the entire book of Deuteronomy. Sifre’s comment to Deut 16:16 includes verbatim quotations of the passages from the Mishnah discussed above:

“[Three times a year every one of your males shall appear [before Yahweh your god...]]” (Deut 16:16): Just as one comes to be seen, so one comes to see [thus excluding blind people, m. Hag. 1.1].

“Your males” (Deut 16:16): Excluding women (m. Hag. 1.1). “Every one of your males” (Deut 16:16): Including minors (cf. m. Hag. 1.1). From this they have said: “Who is a minor? One who cannot ride on his father’s shoulders to ascend from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount—the words of the House of Shammai” (m. Hag. 1.1), as it is said, “your males.” “The House of Hillel say: One who cannot hold his father’s hand to ascend from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount, as it is said, ‘Three pilgrimage festivals’” (m. Hag. 1.1)…. “Before [Yahweh] your god” (Deut 16:16): If you do all that is said concerning this matter I will turn away from all my business (עסקי) and I will busy myself only with you. … “They shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed” (Deut 16:16)… The sages have provided a measure: “The House of Shamai say: The appearance offering is to be two [ma’ahs] of silver and the festival offering one ma’ah of silver. The House of Hillel say: The appearance offering is to be one ma’ah of silver and the festival offering two” (m. Hag 1:2). “A man’s gift shall accord [with the blessing that Yahweh your God has given to you]” (Deut 16:17): From this they have said: “One for whom there are many who eat but few possessions may offer many šelamim sacrifices and few ascending offerings [One for whom there are] many possessions and few who eat may offer many ascending offerings and few šelamim sacrifices. If both are few, this is the one for whom it is said: one ma‘ah of silver and two [ma’ahs] of silver. If both are many, this is the one for whom it is said, ‘A man’s gift shall accord with to the blessing that [Yahweh] your God has given to you’” (Deut 16:17).

The first section of this passage attempts to provide a biblical basis for some of the social categories that are exempted (or excluded) from the obligation to appear in m. Hag. 1:1,
which is quoted directly after a few exegetical maneuvers. The following section provides a remarkably anthropomorphic account of the effect of appearing at the Temple in accordance with these regulations: Yahweh will turn away from whatever else he might happen to be doing and focus solely on the offerer. The following two sections of the passage merely provide lengthy quotations of *m. Hag* 1:2 and 1:5.

Ex 23:15 is commented upon in the *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, which supplies line-by-line commentary to Ex 12:1-23:19, 31:12-17, and 35:1-3. The following passage interrogates the parameters of the biblical commandment and concludes with a fascinating assertion:

“They shall not appear before me empty-handed” (Ex 23:15). [They shall appear] with ascending offerings. Perhaps [it means] with šelāmim sacrifices? Reason thus: joy is mentioned with reference to man, and joy is mentioned with reference to Heaven. Is it not the case that joy with respect to man implies something that is fit for him [i.e., šelāmim sacrifices]? So, too, joy with reference to Heaven implies something fit for Heaven [i.e., ascending offerings]. It is not right that your table is full while your creator’s table is empty.

The opening section of the passage discusses the question of whether ascending offerings or šelāmim sacrifices are to be offered to God in order to satisfy the commandment not to appear before Yahweh empty-handed. The initial assertion is that ascending offerings are required, but then the question is posed whether šelāmim sacrifices might satisfy the obligation. The resolution emerges from the consideration that both humans and God are

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64 I cannot find a clear reference to Yahweh rejoicing at a pilgrimage festival. Perhaps the reference is to Deut 27:6-7: “You shall build the altar of Yahweh your god with whole stones, and you shall offer ascending offerings on it to Yahweh your god, and you shall slaughter šelāmim sacrifices and eat there in the presence of Yahweh your god.” See also Deut 12:7-18; 16:11-15.
to rejoice at the festivals. Šelamim sacrifices, which provide meat, bring joy to humans; ascending offerings, the meat from which is offered up on the altar, bring joy to God. The remarkably anthropomorphic aspect of the passage is heightened in the final statement of the passage: it is not right that people feast while God’s table lies empty. The implication of these assertions, that God feasts and rejoices at the Israelite festivals, is not sustained.

*Sifre Deuteronomy* provides relevant commentary to another verse that deals with sacrifice directly, Deut 12:7: “You shall eat there [i.e., in the place where Yahweh will cause his name to reside] before Yahweh your God, and you shall rejoice in your every undertaking—you and your household—which Yahweh your god has blessed.” Sifre’s comments on the content of the verse sequentially:

“‘You shall eat there before [Yahweh] your God’” With a curtain. “‘You shall rejoice’” Rejoicing (שמיכה) is mentioned here and it is mentioned elsewhere (Deut 27:7). What is rejoicing? There it refers to šelamim sacrifices, so rejoicing here refers to šelamim sacrifices. “In your every undertaking (בכלי שלחתי כלכלה; lit. ‘In every sending forth of your hand’): As for what you send [with] your hands, I will send a blessing for it.”66 “You and your household.” This refers to one’s wife. “Which [Yahweh] your God has blessed you.” Offer everything in accordance with the blessing [one has received] (הביאה ברכאת כלכלה).[67]

The first comment is somewhat unclear, but it likely refers to the Mishnah’s ruling that the priests are to eat their most-holy sacrifices in an area of the Temple separated by a curtain.68 The second comment concludes on the basis of an intertext (Deut 27:7) that rejoicing entails the offering of šelamim sacrifices, which provide meat for their

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65 The preceding verse is also relevant: “Offer (הבאתם; or “bring”) there your ascending offerings, your slain offerings, your tithes, the contribution of your hands, your votive offerings, your voluntary offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and flock” (Deut 12:6).
66 Heb: בכלי שלחתה כלכל תמך והביא |= הבראה ככלל הרבח שלחתה。
67 *Pisqa* 64; Finkelstein 130-131.
The third comment provides a fascinating articulation of the principle of human-divine reciprocity that proceeds from the idiomatic Hebrew phrase, “in your every undertaking/in every sending forth of your hand.” The passage interprets this phrase as referring to items that are sent forth from one’s hands, which, in this context, likely refers to sacrificial offerings. The statement that Yahweh will send a blessing in response to the offering that a person has sent to him is unmistakably reciprocal. The next section of the passage interprets the word “house, household” as a reference to a man’s wife, which is common in rabbinic texts. The final section of the passage articulates the principle of human-divine reciprocity yet again, but in this instance it approaches reciprocation from the human side of the relationship: one should offer sacrifices in proportion to the blessings that Yahweh has provided.

Other midrashic texts attempt to derive parameters for the quality or quantity of sacrificial offering from minute aspects of biblical terminology. *Sifra Leviticus*, which provides analytic commentary to the book of Leviticus, derives age guidelines for offerings of pigeons and doves from a seemingly ordinary term used for doves:

“[He shall offer his offering] from the pigeons (תורין) or from the doves (יונה בני ומן) [lit. “from the sons of doves;” Lev 1:14]. Is it possible that that all pigeons (תורין) are valid (כשרין) and all doves (יונה בני ומן) are invalid (פסולים)? The Learning (תלמוד) says, “from the pigeons”—not all pigeons—“from the doves”—not all doves. It makes the specification with respect to the beginning of brightening (צהוב) [of plumage] with respect to both. When do pigeons become valid? When they brighten. When do doves become invalid? When they brighten. When pigeons brighten they become valid; when doves brighten they become invalid.”

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69 Deut 27:7: “You shall slaughter šelamim sacrifices and eat there, and rejoice before Yahweh your god.”
71 See above, p27n55 for a note on the text of *Sifra* that I have employed.
72 *Dibura Denedabah Pereq* 8; Koleditzky vol. 1 17; Neusner vol. 1 131-132.
The first section of the passage deduces that the partitive preposition, “from” (מן) indicates that only some members of the two species “doves” and “pigeons” are valid as ascending offerings. It then infers that the Hebrew classifier “sons of” (בני) refers to young members of the species “dove.” This inference also provides the principle for the partitive division of the species “pigeons.” Because the biblical verse does not specify “young pigeons” (בני התרים) as it does “young doves,” it is concluded that only mature pigeons are valid. The text then introduces an indicator that applies to both pigeons and doves: the brightening of the birds’ plumage. At brightening pigeons become valid while doves become invalid. This interpretation is elegant, if forced.

*Sifra* also interrogates the implications of seemingly minute aspects of biblical phraseology. The following passage derives practical and homiletical conclusions from the phrase, “the pieces, the fat, and the head” (Lev 1:8):

“The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall lay the pieces, [the fat, and the head on the wood that is on the altar fire]” (Lev 1:8). What does the Learning say about the head and the fat? Only that the head and the fat are not included in the pieces [i.e., they are not to be cut up]. Another interpretation: the fat is to be spread over the cut because this is a way to honor the Most High (šlah של כבוד דרך הוא). The passage asks why the biblical text mentions the head and the fat in addition to the pieces, instead of referring to the fat and the head as pieces. The first answer is that the head and the fat are different from the other pieces of the animal because they are placed on the altar whole, and not cut into smaller pieces. The second answer is that the fat is to be placed over the cut on the animal’s head in order to conceal the wound inflicted in its slaughter; this makes the offering more becoming.

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73 This conclusion is philologically doubtful, as the classifier “sons of” often refers to members of a class or species—not necessarily young members of that class or species—in biblical Hebrew. See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 150.

74 *Dibura Denedabah Pereq* 6; Koleditzky vol. 1 12; Neusner vol. 1 114-115.
The following passage from *Sifra* derives homiletic conclusions about the nature, effects, and prerequisites of šelamim sacrifices on the basis of cognate words that possess the same etymological root (שלם) as the term for this kind of sacrifice:

“If his offering is a slain šelamim sacrifice” (Lev 3:1): Rabbi Judah says: Everyone who offers a šelamim sacrifice (שלמים מביא כל העולם) brings peace (שלום) to the world (שלום мир). In another interpretation of “šelamim”: Because all are at peace (שלום) by them: the blood and the sacrificial portions (האמורים) for the altar, the shoulder and the thigh for the priests, and the skin and the meat for the owners. Rabbi Shimon says [=Tosefta]: one who is whole (שלם) may offer a šelamim sacrifice. A mourner does not offer a sacrifice.  

The first interpretation, that one who offers šelamim sacrifices brings peace to the world, is premised upon the similarity between the words šelamim and šalom, “peace.” The second interpretation derives the term šelamim its manner of offering. The priest, the offerer, and the “altar” (i.e., God) are all at peace (שלום) because they each receive part of the sacrifice. The third interpretation, that only people who are figuratively whole may offer šelamim sacrifices proceeds from the similarity between the words šelamim and šalem, “whole.”

Another passage from *Sifra* derives a homiletical conclusion from the fact that various passages in Lev 1-2 state that offerings of different costs and quantities all produce a “pleasing aroma for Yahweh (ריח ניחח лиוהו)."

*Sifra* 141 [p65] It is said with respect to an ascending offering of cattle, “an offering of pleasing aroma” (Lev 1:9, 13), with respect to an ascending offering of birds, “an offering of pleasing aroma” (Lev 1:17) with respect to tribute, “an offering of pleasing aroma” (Lev 2:2) in order to teach you that [offerings] large and small are the same, so long as a person directs his mind toward heaven (לשמים).  

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75 *Dibura Denedabah Pereq* 16; Koleditzky vol. 1 33; Neusner vol. 1 185-186.  
76 The Tosefta contains a parallel to this statement (t. Zeb 11:1).  
77 *Dibura Denedabah Pereq* 9; Koleditzky vol. 1 19; Neusner vol. 1 141.
This passage articulates the principle of generalized sacrificial reciprocity: so long as one’s intentions are appropriate, the value and quantity of one’s offerings is immaterial.

Whereas the passages above deal with non-expiatory sacrifices, *Sifra* also offers interesting commentary on expiatory sacrifices. Some of this commentary merely reiterates or amplifies biblical verses dealing with such sacrifices, as in the following passage which comments upon a prescription for offering offense/purification sacrifices:

“When you commit an offense inadvertently […] offer a young bull as an offense/purification sacrifice” (Lev 4:2). On account of an inadvertent act (השגגה) one makes an offering (מביא); one does not make an offering for a deliberate act (ה窠ורן).  

This comment reiterates the position that I have argued for in chapters two and six, namely that expiatory sacrifices are capable of rectifying only offenses of an unintentional nature. Another passage from *Sifra* provides homiletic commentary to Lev 14:19, which states that a priest who is purifying a person from skin disease (צרעת) must offer first an offense/purification offering, and then an ascending offering:

*Rabbi Shimon said, “An offense/purification offering (חטאת) is like an advocate (פרקליט; Gk. παράκλητος) that is brought in to seek favor (לרצות נכנס). The advocate gains favor (הפרקליט רצה), and then the gift is brought in (הדורון; Gk. δῶρον).”*

The interpretation proceeds from the sequence of the two offerings in the biblical prescription. The offense/purification offering is likened to an advocate, who seeks the favor of an alienated or adversarial addressee. Once the advocate has gained the favor of the addressee and the preconditions for gift-giving have resumed, the gift is then presented to the addressee. This passage is remarkable for its treatment of

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78 *Dibura Dehobah Parashah* 1; Koleditzky vol.1 40, Neusner vol. 1 211.
79 Lev 14:19: “The priest shall make an offense/purification offering on account of the one being purified from his impurity, and afterward he shall slaughter the ascending offering.”
80 *Meṣora Pereq* 3; Koleditzky vol. 2 10; Neusner vol. 2 346.
offense/purification offerings as preliminary or apology gifts and ascending offerings as gifts that presuppose relatively favorable relations.

The following passage from *Sifre Deuteronomy* derives a rabbinic term for the Jerusalem Temple (“Lebanon”) from the notion that the Temple cult provides expiation from transgressions:

> Why do they call [the Temple] Lebanon (לַבְנון)? Because it makes the transgressions of Israel white (ישראל של עונותיהם שלבבין), as it is said, “If your offenses are like scarlet, they will become white like snow” (כshall לבנון; Isa 1:18).

81

The Temple is called “Lebanon,” which has the same etymological root as the Hebrew word “white” (לבן), because it “whitens” the transgressions of Israel, an image that is reminiscent of the wiping away or wiping clean (כפר) of offenses in Priestly texts. The biblical intertext that supports this interpretation is paradoxically embedded in a textual unit that forthrightly rejects the notion that sacrifices and other supplicatory practices are capable of rectifying Israel’s misdeeds and preventing God’s punishments.

Unlike the juristic passages from the Mishnah that I examined in the previous section, several of the midrashic passages above unmistakably associate the practice of sacrifice with human-divine reciprocity. To my mind, however, these scattered statements do not rise to the level of a sustained discourse. In the next section of this chapter, I present texts from the Mishnah and from the Tannaitic midrash collections that assert that practices such as the study of the Instruction, the fulfillment of the biblical

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81 *Pisqa* 6; Finkelstein 14-5.
commandments, and the performance of other meritorious acts are especially efficacious in pleasing God and bringing about divine rewards in this world and the next.\textsuperscript{82}

The Mishnah presents a relatively clear statement to this effect in tractate \textit{Pe'ah} ("Corner"), which, among other topics, expounds upon the biblical commandments to leave gleanings and the corners of fields unharvested for the benefit of poor people and resident aliens (Lev 19:9-10; 23:22):\textsuperscript{83}

These are the matters for which there is no measure (שעורים): gleanings, first-fruits, appearance-offerings, acts of charity (椀ילאות חסדים),\textsuperscript{84} and study of the Instruction (תלמוד תורה). These are the matters on account of which a man enjoys their profit in this world, and the capital remains for him (שאמה אוכל פררותין) in the world to come: honoring father and mother, acts of charity (椀ילאות חסדים),

\textsuperscript{82} There is an interesting exegetical practice in midrashic texts that interprets references to God (אלהים) as assertions that he is faithful judge. E.g., “God spoke” (Ex 19:19): God is none other than a judge, a judge to punish (משפט) and faithful to repay a reward (שכר לשלם נאמן) [\textit{Mekilta Bahodesh} 4; Lauterbach 312].

\textsuperscript{83} “When you harvest your land, do not harvest the corners of your field, and do not collect the gleanings of your harvest. Do not comb your vineyard, and do not collect the fallen-fruit of your vineyard. Leave them for poor people and resident aliens. I am Yahweh your God” (Lev 19:9-10).

“When you harvest your land, do not harvest the corner of your field, and do not collect the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for poor people and resident aliens. I am Yahweh your God” (Lev 23:22).

\textsuperscript{84} For this translation, see Satlow, “Fruit and the Fruit of Fruit,” 251, 265.
The inclusion of this fascinating passage in tractate Peʾah likely stems from the fact that the tractate deals with “gleanings,” one of the items listed for which there is no precise measure as to its fulfillment or performance. Two of the other items on the list—appearance offerings and first-fruits—also derive from biblical commandments, and I have treated these topics above. The latter two items—what I have called “meritorious acts” and study of the Instruction—have no biblical basis and are hallmarks of rabbinic religiosity. Following the list of matters that have no measure, the passage presents a list of practices that accrue benefits for those who perform them in both this world and the next. This list includes two new items—honoring one’s father and mother and bringing peace between people—and two matters from the previous list—meritorious acts and study of the Instruction.

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85 The Tosefta provides a fascinating addendum to this passage: “Corner [produce] has a minimal measure but it has no maximum measure (m. Peʾah 1:2). As for one who makes all his field corner [produce]: it is not corner [produce]. For these matters one is punished (נפרעין) by people in this world and the capital remains in the world to come: strange worship (“idolatry”), revelation of nakedness (incest), and shedding blood, and the evil tongue (gossip) is equal to them all (כולם כנגד; כלמה לוחם; לוחם לוחם; לוחם לוחם לוחם). Performing actions that obtain merit (צדק) has both capital (קרן) and interest (lit. “fruits”; פרי, פירות, פירות), as it is said, ‘Tell the righteous that it will be well, [for they will eat] the fruits ( פרי) [of their deeds]’ (Isa 3:10). A transgression (עבירה) has capital but no interest, as it is said, ‘Alas, it will be bad for the evil one [for the recompense of his hands will be done to him]’ (Isa 3:11). [There is no mention of fruit]. If so, how do I interpret, ‘[Because they hate knowledge, and did not chose the reverence of Yahweh, and they were not willing to accept my counsel, and they spurned my reproof,] they will eat of the fruit of their way (דרכם מ פרי), etc.’ (Prov 1:29-31). A transgression that makes fruit [i.e., further transgressions] has fruit [in this world]; one that does not make fruit has no fruit. The Place (a term for God; המקום), blessed is he, joins (משתרת) a good intention (_Execute, שביעת הלב) [to a deed], but the place does not join an evil intention, as it is said, ‘If I look upon iniquity (און) Yahweh will listen’ (Ps 66:18). Then how do I interpret, ‘Hear this, Earth, I am about to bring evil upon this people, the fruit of their machinations (חכמה)’? Rather: As for an [evil] intention that makes fruit, the Place joins it with an action; as for an [evil] intention that does not make fruit, the Place does not join it with an action” (T. Peʾah 1:4; Lieberman v.1 41-42). On the verb, “performing actions that obtain merit (צדק),” see Satlow, “Fruit and the Fruit of Fruit,” 258.

86 Shabbat 2:6: On account of three transgressions women die at the time of childbirth: because they are not cautious in the matters of menstruation, dough, and lighting the [Sabbath] candle.
study of the Instruction. The fiscal terminology of this section of the passage is intriguing; the practices accrue divine capital in the next world that pays dividends in this one. It is noteworthy that the latter list does not include the two sacrificial practices of the previous list, appearance offerings and first-fruits. The final assertion places the study of the Instruction above the other practices that bring about benefits in this world and the next.

Several midrashic texts likewise assert that the study of the Instruction precipitates divine rewards. The following passage from Sifre draws a hierarchical contrast between learning and meritorious deeds:

Just as the punishment (הענש) for [the neglect of] learning (הלמדת), so, too, [God] gives a greater reward (שכר) for learning than deeds, as it is said, “Teach (לומדת) them to your children that you might speak of them” (Deut 11:19). What [else] does it say? “In order that you might multiply your days and the days of your children” (Deut 11:21). ⁸⁷

This passage draws an interesting conclusion from Deut 11:19, which ordains that the Israelites teach the words of the Deuteronomistic covenant to their children, and Deut 11:21, which states that compliance with the preceding instructions will result in both parents and children enjoying longer life-spans. The injunction to teach one’s children the terms of the covenant in the former verse is interpreted as a more general injunction for study of the Instruction, and the latter verse is interpreted as stating that divine rewards result from such study. A later passage in the same pisqa nevertheless asserts that the proper motivation for studying the Instruction is love rather than reward:

“To love [Yahweh] your God” (Deut 11:13). Perhaps you might say, “I will study the Instruction in order that I might become rich, in order that I might be called, “my lord” (רבי), in order that I might receive a reward in the world to come (הבא

⁸⁷ Pisqa 41; Finkelstein 85-6.
The Learning says, “To love [Yahweh] your God.” Everything you do, you should do out of love.”

This passage does not deny that the study of the Instruction might bring about tangible benefits such as wealth, prestige, and a rewards in the next life; rather, it states that such benefits should not motivate one’s study of the Instruction.

The following passage from the *Mekilta* claims that the study of the Instruction, prayer, and meritorious deeds are beautiful and pleasing to God on the basis of a passage from the Song of Songs:

“[My dove, in the cleft of the rock, in the hidden part of the cliff, show me your (fem.) appearance, let me hear your voice.] for your voice is sweet (כ齰) and your appearance is beautiful (נאה)” (Song 2:14). Your voice is sweet in prayer and your appearance is beautiful in the study of the Instruction (תורה בתלמוד). Another interpretation: your voice is sweet in prayer and your appearance is beautiful in meritorious deeds (במעשה).  

The material immediately preceding this passage compares the circumstances of Israelites at Ex 14:9-14, when they are caught between the approaching Egyptian army and the sea, to that of a “dove that fled from a hawk and entered a cleft in the rock in which there was a hissing snake. If it enters further, there is the snake; if it goes out, there is the hawk.” Song 2:14 is then adduced as a reference to the Israelites in their predicament with the Egyptians. The passage above follows the comparison and provides further exegesis of the verse from the Song of Songs. The first interpretation asserts that the addressee’s voice is sweet in prayer and appearance in the study of the Instruction. The second interpretation replaces study of the Instruction with meritorious deeds. This is the same juxtaposition that appears in the passage from *Sifre* above, and it seems that the relative

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88 *Pisqa* 41; Finkelstein 87.
89 *Beshallah* 3. Lauterbach 141.
90 *Beshallah* 3. Lauterbach 140.
merits of each practice were debated in rabbinic circles. Another passage in the *Mekila*
tates that the performance of commandments beautifies a person in the sight of God:

“I will beautify him (אנוהו) (Ex 15:2). Rabbi Ishmael says: Is it possible for flesh
and blood to beautify his creator? Rather: I will be beautiful to him (לו א뇨ה)
through the commandments that I will perform in his presence (לפניו:)
a beautiful (*נוה*) lulab, a beautiful *sukkah*, beautiful fringes, and beautiful
phylacteries. 91

The passage takes as its starting point the first part of the following couplet from the
Song of the Sea (Ex 15:1-18), “This is my god, and I will beautify him; the god of my
father, and I will exalt him (ארממנהו)” (Ex 15:2). The passage presents Rabbi Ishmael
taking exception to this formulation by posing the rhetorical question of whether it is
possible for a creature of flesh and blood to beautify his divine creator. It then provides
an emendation of the passage that changes the stem of the verb from causative to
intensive and the direct object to an indirect object, yielding the formulation, “I will be
beautiful to him.” The passage then explains how one might become beautiful to God,
namely through the performance of certain commandments that have a strong visual
aspect: waving a * lulav* (Lev 23:40), constructing a *sukkah* (Lev 23:42), wearing garments
with fringes (Num 15:37-41, Deut 22:12), and praying with phylacteries (Deut 11:18).

A few midrashic texts assert that certain practices and experiences are the
equivalent to offering sacrifices. The following passage from *Sifra* claims that one who
leaves portions of his harvest for the poor in accordance with biblical injunctions is
credited as though he were offering sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple:

“When you harvest the produce of your land do not reap the corners of your field
in your harvesting, and do not collect the gleanings of your harvest” (Lev 23:22).
Rabbi Avardimos (אברדימוס) 92 said in the name of Rabbi Yose: Why did the

91 Shirata 3. Lauterbach 185.
Writing put [this passage] between the regulations for Passover (Lev 23:5-8) and Shavuot (Lev 23:9-21) on one side and New Year (Lev 23:23-25) and the Day of Expiation (Lev 23:26-32) on the other? Only to teach that whoever presents gleanings, forgotten sheaves (Deut 24:19), field-corner [produce], and the tithe of the poor (Deut 26:12) is credited as though the Temple were standing and he was offering his offerings therein. Anyone that does not present gleanings, forgotten sheaves, field-corner [produce], and the tithe of the poor is credited as though the Temple were standing and he was not offering his offerings therein.93

This interpretation in the name of R. Yose via R. Avardimos proceeds from the curious fact that the commandment to leave the corners of one’s field unharvested and gleanings uncollected (Lev 23:22) is positioned in between regulations for various sacrificial festivals. The conclusion that the passage reaches is remarkable: one who performs these commandments that benefit the poor “is credited as though the Temple were standing and he was offering his offerings therein.” The inverse is also true: one who does not perform the commandments is credited as though the Temple were standing and he was not offering his sacrifices. Commandments for charitable giving, then, provide an opportunity to satisfy biblical obligations to offer sacrifices that are otherwise impossible to fulfill after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.

The following passage first draws a comparison between divine afflictions and sacrificial offerings and then states that afflictions are superior to offerings. The passage appears in both the Mekilta and Sifre, and in both texts it is embedded in lengthy and discursive textual units that celebrate the value of afflictions:

Rabbi Nehemiah says: Afflictions (יסורים) are precious (חביבים) because just as offerings (קרבנות) are acceptable (מרצים) so, too, afflictions are acceptable. Concerning offerings it says, “It will be accepted for him in order to expiate on his behalf” (Lev 1:4). Concerning afflictions it says, “They will accept their iniquity (יארצו את עונם; Lev 26:43). Moreover, afflictions are more acceptable than offerings, for offerings are of wealth (בממון) whereas afflictions are of the body

93 Emor Pereq 13; Koleditzky vol. 2 139-140; Neusner vol. 3 250.
Thus it says, “Skin for skin, all that a man has he will give for his life” (Job 2:4).\textsuperscript{94}

The passage, which is attributed to R. Nehemiah, appears in Sifre’s comment to Deut 6:5\textsuperscript{95} and the Mekilta’s comment to Ex 20:19,\textsuperscript{96} although it bears little direct connection to either of these verses. The first section asserts that just as ascending offerings effect expiation on behalf of their offerers, punishments make amends for the transgressions that brought them about. The textual basis for this comparison is the verb “accept,” which appears in both Lev 1:4 and 26:43, though the verb is passive in the former passage and active in the latter. Perhaps Lev 26:43 is to be read in the passive, “They will be accepted with respect to their punishment,” although this would involve a problematic reading of the direct object marker (את). The second section of the verse asserts that afflictions are more acceptable than offerings because one purchases offerings with money whereas afflictions are visited upon the body. The verse from Job is interpreted as making a positive statement about the efficacy of bodily afflictions rather than a critical observation about human desperation in the face of bodily harm. As with the previous passage, this one asserts that despite the destruction of the Temple one might achieve religious effects that are equivalent or superior to the offering of sacrifices.

Finally, I have isolated two lengthy and important passages in the Mekilta that associate the offering of sacrifices with the provision of divine rewards. These rewards, however, are explicitly stated to result from the performance of meritorious deeds and the fulfillment of biblical commandments rather than any inherent capacity of sacrifices to please God. The first of these passages appears in the Mekilta’s commentary to Ex 12:6:

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{94} Sifre Pisqa 32; Finkelstein 57. Mekilta Ba  odesh 10; Lauterbach 346.
\textsuperscript{95} “You shall love Yahweh your god with all your heart, all your soul, and all your might.”
\textsuperscript{96} “You shall not make with me gods of silver, and gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves.”
\end{footnotesize}
“[The Passover lamb] shall be in your charge [until the fourteenth of this month, and all the assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at dusk]” (Ex 12:6). Why does the Writing [require] the acquisition of the Passover lamb four days before its slaughter? Rabbi Matia ben Heresh used to say: Now this [verse] says: “I passed over (א…and I saw you; your time was a time of love (דודים) (Ezek 16:8). The oath that the Holy One, blessed is he, had sworn to our ancestor Abraham had arrived [for fulfillment], that he would redeem his children. But they did not have any commandments (מצות) which they might perform (lit. “occupy themselves with them;”) in order that they might be redeemed (בדי שיאתלו), as it is said, “[your] breasts were formed and your (fem.) hair grown, but you were naked and bare” (Ezek 16:7). Bare of all the commandments. The Holy One, blessed is he, gave two commandments, the commandment of Passover and the commandment of circumcision, which they might perform in order that they might be redeemed, as it is said, “I passed over (א…and I saw you, wallowing in your blood, [and I said to you, in your blood live; in your blood live].” (Ezek 16:6). It [also] says: “As for you (fem.) also, by the blood of your covenant I will send your prisoners out of the pit in which there is no water” (Zech 9:11). On this account the Writing [requires] the acquisition of the Passover [lamb] four days before its slaughter, for one cannot obtain a reward except on account of a meritorious deed (העשה על אלא שכר נוטלין).97

This rich passage poses the question as to why the biblical text requires the acquisition of the Passover lamb four days before its slaughter. The text attributes an answer to Rabbi Matia ben Heresh that employs Ezek 16:6-8 as an intertext. Ezek 16:8 is applied to the verse on the basis of the verb, “I passed over (א…and),” which also features prominently in the Passover narrative. The “time of love” in the second part of Ezek 16:8 is interpreted as referring to God’s redemption of the Israelites from Egyptian servitude in accordance with his promise to Abraham. The next section of the passage infers that Ezek 16:7’s description of Jerusalem as a naked woman refers to Israel’s lack of commandments which they might perform in order to merit redemption. Ezek 16:6’s description of Jerusalem wallowing in blood is then interpreted as referring to God’s provision of two commandments involving blood by which the Israelites might live, the commandment to

97 Pisha 5. Lauterbach 23-4.
circumcise boys and the commandment to offer Passover sacrifices. Zech 9:11’s reference to prisoners being sent out from an arid place by the blood of the covenant corroborates the previous interpretation. The passage concludes with an unmistakably clear statement concerning this manner of religiosity: one cannot obtain a reward without the performance of meritorious deeds such as biblical commandments.

A similar approach to the offering of sacrifices and the performance of the commandments is taken in this second lengthy and important passage, which comments upon Ex 13:2:

[“Sanctify to me every first-born—every one that opens the womb—among the Israelites, man and beast] it is mine” (Ex 13:2). Why is it said? Because [when] it says, “[As for every firstling that is born in your herd and in your flock,] sanctify the male to [Yahweh] your God” (Deut 15:19), [it means] sanctify it in order that you might receive a reward (擢 הקב ל). Or [perhaps], if you sanctify it it is sanctified and if not it is not sanctified. The Learning says, “it is mine” (Ex 13:2). In every case. [The upshot of Ex 13:2 is that even in the case of Deut 15:19 it already belongs to Yahweh.] Then why does the Learning say, “sanctify the male”? Sanctify it in order that you might receive a reward. In like manner you say, “The priest shall kindle (בער) wood upon [the altar every morning] etc.,” (Lev 6:5). Why is it said? Has it not already been said, “Lebanon is not sufficient fuel (בער; Isa 40:16)”? Why does the Learning say, “The priest shall kindle wood”? In order that you might receive a reward. In like manner you say, “Offer (העשת) the one lamb in the morning [and the second lamb at dusk]” (Ex 29:39). Why is it said? Has it not already been said, “[Lebanon is not sufficient fuel] and its animal[s] insufficient for an ascending offering?” (Isa 40:16) Then why does the Learning say, “offer the one lamb”? In order that you might receive a reward. In like manner you say, “make me a sanctuary and I will dwell among you” (Ex 25:8). Why is it said? Has it not already been said, “The heavens are my throne… where is the house that you will build for me?” (Isa 66:1)? Then why does the Learning say, “make me a sanctuary”? In order to receive a reward (שלケット שכר).98

The passage asks why Ex 13:2 contains the assertion “it is mine” in reference to first-born males. The answer is that this assertion clarifies the ultimate status of first-born males not only with respect to Ex 13:2 but also in respect to a similar assertion in Deut

98 Pisha 16; Lauterbach 89-90.
15:19 that does not contain the statement, “it is mine.” In both cases, the first-born male belongs to God regardless of whether his father sanctifies him. The somewhat superfluous commandment to sanctify the first-born male is then interpreted as merely providing a venue for its fulfillment that might bring about a reward. The same approach is then applied to matters extraneous to Ex 13:2. The passage asks why Lev 6:5 ordains that a priest is to kindle a fire on the altar everyday when even all the cedars of Lebanon would not provide sufficient fuel to make an ascending offering proportionate to God’s grandeur. The answer is the same, *mutatis mutandis*, the fire is indeed insufficient and immaterial to God, but the priest who performs this commandment receives a reward. The same approach is then applied to the daily ascending offering. The same intertext, Isa 40:16, is employed to make the point that all the animals of Lebanon would be insufficient to produce an offering befitting God’s greatness. As in the previous case, the commandment has not been enjoined to render homage that is befitting to God, but only in order that one who fulfills the commandment might merit a reward. Finally, this approach is applied to the Temple. Isa 66:1 introduces the notion that the Temple is an insufficient residence for God, whose throne is the heavens. Again, the answer is that the commandment to build a Temple was given only to provide a venue for Israel to merit a reward. This passage provides a remarkably clear statement of the religiosity of individualized merit reciprocity on the basis of the fulfillment of biblical commandments.

In my view, the two passages above typify the rabbinic approach to sacrifice. Tannaitic rabbinic texts display no problem or issue with the practice of sacrifice, but they treat it as a means of fulfilling biblical commandments and other religious obligations rather than as a special medium for interacting with God. At a more general
level, I conclude that rabbinic texts interact with the topic of sacrifice on a largely textual basis, exegeting the parameters for biblically-ordained sacrificial practices, deriving inferences from biblical terms and procedures, and narrating the practices that biblical texts prescribe to take place at the now-defunct Jerusalem Temple. In chapters four and six I argued that the Temple-era writings of Philo and Paul employ sacrificial terms and concepts when they describe or comment upon active exchanges in the domain of human-divine reciprocity, even though these writings do not display any immediate stake or investment in the practice. Rabbinic texts, on the other hand, do not display the same tendency; they treat the study of the Instruction and the performance of biblical commandments and other meritorious deeds as the preeminent means of pleasing God and occasioning divine rewards (שכר). It is also noteworthy that tannaitic texts articulate this relatively novel religiosity using terminology that has no biblical precedent.

I would suggest two factors to explain this state of affairs. First, by the time that tannaitic rabbinic texts were redacted, the Jerusalem Temple had been destroyed for some 150-250 years. The practice of offering sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple was a distant memory, and it seems likely that other religious practices might have appeared in its stead.99 Second, by most scholarly accounts the generations of authors who contributed to the tannaitic corpus were a highly literate group of provincial textual exegete-jurists. It seems likely to me that they would have been oriented toward a mode religiosity that likewise emphasized textual and legal matters. It is no coincidence, I think, that rabbinic texts treat the study of the Instruction as one of the most beneficial religious practices when the rabbinic texts themselves are likely one artifact of this practice. Similarly,

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99 Cohn, *Memory of the Temple*, 1.
rabbinic texts do not merely extol the efficacy of the performance of the commandments, they also provide guidelines for such performance. In rabbinic texts, then, one might witness our earliest evidence for the transformation of Judean religiosity that was by and large centered around a cult-site that was a locus for human divine reciprocity into another religiosity entirely, one centered on textual study, ethical behavior, and the performance of detailed rituals. The social parameters and expectations of this arrangement are different from those of the previous era; textual study and obedience to the commandments has largely replaced the exchange of pleasing favors in the context of an amicable relationship.
CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters I have argued that our Temple-era Judean textual evidence that comments on the sacrificial cult of the Jerusalem Temple or on the practice of sacrifice more generally supports the hypothesis that the Temple cult was understood to constitute a locus for conducting human-divine reciprocity, wherein priestly and lay practitioners alike participated in on-going relations with the Judean national god Yahweh. I provide here a brief summary of the conclusions of the individual chapters. In chapter two I argued that almost every aspect of the Hebrew and Greek biblical terminology of sacrifice, including both the terms for the sacrifices and the verbs that describe their offering, has clear and explicit reciprocal valences. Many generic and specific Greek and Hebrew terms for sacrifices derive from gift-giving terminology, or they presuppose and invoke a reciprocal framework of bilateral exchange (“vow,” “thank offering”). The exceptions are terms that describe the manner or occasion of a given sacrifice (e.g., “libation, poured offering,” “perpetual ascending offering”), and these do not undermine the reciprocal valences of the other terms. Moreover, the concern that sacrifices be acceptable in order that they might be credited to their offerer’s account further speaks to
their reciprocal functioning. In chapter three, I argued that biblical prophetic texts corroborate the association between sacrifices and gifts, as they portray Yahweh rejecting the sacrifices of Israel and Judah during periods of military defeat that were perceived as punitive ruptures in their relationships with their national god. Many prophetic texts assert that after this period of punishment, relations between Yahweh and Israel or Judah will normalize he will accept their sacrifices again. In my reading, this material articulates rather than contests many of the key conceptual components of sacrificial reciprocity. In the fourth chapter, I argued that throughout Philo’s often lengthy discussions and deliberations about the practice of sacrifice, he consistently treats it as an active process of dynamic exchange between humans and God. Philo’s occasional misgivings about the appropriateness of offering sacrifices and other material gifts to God, his preference for noetic expressions of gratitude and homage, and his assertions that humans cannot bribe God with their gifts all corroborate and even articulate the reciprocal logic of offering sacrifices in a somewhat idealized manner. Philo’s arguments have clear parallels in Greek philosophy and also accord with most aspects of biblical prophetic rhetoric pertaining to sacrifice.

In chapter five I pursued two related arguments. First, I argued that the innovative, “non-biblical” texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus employ biblical sacrificial terminology that is inherently reciprocal, and they frequently recapitulate biblical formulae that express the reciprocal aspect of sacrificial practice. In addition, several texts present exemplary figures from Genesis offering sacrifices in reciprocal situations, making requests or entreaties of God. This material supports the reciprocal theorization of sacrifice argued in the preceding chapters, and it also undermines the claim that Judean
religion was transitioning from prayer to sacrifice in the Second Temple period. In the second part of this chapter, I considered the polemic against the Jerusalem Temple priesthood that runs through many of these texts and culminates in the prohibition of offering sacrifices to Yahweh at the Jerusalem Temple. I argued that several features of this polemical material suggest that the polemic is a “sectarian” innovation that reflects the exclusivist orientation and competitive strategies of the soteriological initiation movement(s) behind these texts, rather than some traditionalist protest against Hasmonean innovations or progress toward the “spiritualization” of sacrifice.

In chapter six I argued that the writings of the Apostle Paul provide further support for the reciprocal understanding of sacrifice. Even though Paul does not advocate offering sacrifices directly, he describes monetary donations and obedience to his religious program as sacrifices that please God and result in divine rewards. Paul’s usage of sacrifice as a metaphor in this regard implies that such assumptions about the practice of sacrifice were commonplace. In the second part of the chapter, I argued that no aspect of the secure Pauline corpus supports the theory that Paul understood Jesus’ death to have functioned as a “sin sacrifice,” as scholars of early Christianity often maintain. Were this in fact the case, it would constitute a considerable oddity in our Temple-era evidence for the practice of sacrifice. Rather, I suggested that Paul understood the death and resurrection of Christ to have provided an opportunity for Gentiles to render homage to God, acknowledge his power over life and death, and rectify the dishonor of “idolatry.”

In chapter seven I returned to the Pauline corpus and two texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Damascus Document and the Rule of the Community. I argued that both corpora claim that the human-divine relationship has broken down due to human offenses
against God, and that God is preparing to bring terrible, retributive punishments against humans. I argued that the brokenness of the human-divine relationship in these portrayals helps to account for the fact that neither corpora advocates offering sacrifices in present circumstances—God is in no mood for gifts. I also argued that the eschatological scenarios depicted in these corpora anticipate the religious services proffered by these texts: initiation into religious communities, reconciliation with God, salvation from the coming punishments, essential character improvements, and eternal life. My arguments here provide a preliminary schema for explaining some of the social and conceptual parameters of salvation religion more generally.

In chapter eight I considered tannaitic rabbinic texts dealing with sacrifice. I argued that these texts are remarkable for the fact that they treat the practice of sacrifice, by and large, as fulfilling biblical commandments and discharging religious obligations rather than as a special means of interacting with God on a reciprocal basis. Only a few midrashic texts comment upon the transactional and reciprocal aspects of sacrificial practice, which I have argued are front and center in “Temple-era” textual material concerning sacrifice. Instead of offering sacrifices, rabbinic texts assert that the study of the Instruction and rabbinic traditions, fulfilling the commandments (which might include sacrifice), and performing meritorious deeds such as charitable giving are especially effective in precipitating divine rewards. I suggest that this approach to the practice of sacrifice and religion more generally became commonplace in later rabbinic religiosities.

I will now discuss what I think are the four most important implications of this study. These are more hypothetical and synthetic than the conclusions of the individual chapters, which must take intellectual precedence. First, in my opinion our evidence
strongly suggests that there was no discernible difference between Second Temple Judean sacrificial religion (i.e., “Second Temple Judaism”) and non-Judean Greco-Roman sacrificial religion (so-called “Paganism”). Both Judean and non-Judean inhabitants of the ancient Mediterranean basin offered sacrifices for precisely the same reasons: to celebrate public festivals, to fulfill public or private vows made to a god, to make requests for religious goods (“blessings”) from a god, to pay homage or tribute to a god, to repay a token portion of a harvest to a god, to provide meat for festive meals, and to give thanks to a god for deliverance from dangerous situations or for generally favorable conditions. In addition, Judean and non-Judean priests offered expiatory sacrifices to rectify unintentional violations against a god’s sacra or to purify people or sacred precincts, not to atone for moral sins. Moreover, the basic mechanics of sacrifice—incinerating special portions of an animal, grain, or incense offering on an altar or pouring a libation before a god—are basically identical in Judean and non-Judean sources. All ancient Mediterranean cult sites had special or idiosyncratic features, and so I am hesitant to interpret the relative aniconism\(^1\) and relative centralization\(^2\) of the Judean sacrificial cult as indicators that Judean sacrificial religion differed in some essential respect from non-Judean Mediterranean sacrificial religion. At any rate, none of our ancient Judean sources contain claims for the uniqueness of the Judean sacrificial cult or its essential difference from non-Judean sacrificial praxis. In my estimation, Judean sacrificial religion was part and parcel of wider ancient Mediterranean sacrificial religion.

Second, ancient Judean sacrificial religion was oriented toward practical goals and tangible interests, and it employed every-day human assumptions about interpersonal

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\(^1\) There appear to have been cherubs in Yahweh’s First Temple that served as his throne.

\(^2\) There were Judean Yahweh temples at Elephantine and later at Leontopolis.
sociality. When people offered sacrifices to give thanks or to pay vows, the operative assumption was that the god receiving the thank or vow sacrifice had helped to bring about the positive situation occasioning the sacrifice, whether this was healing, a bountiful harvest, success in warfare, etc. The logic of sacrifice was the logic of generalized reciprocity between superiors and subordinates in an ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship. In my opinion there is no reason to posit any symbolic, social, evolutionary, or ethical substratum of sacrificial practice in order to explain its functioning, and there is no evidence to support the notion that the practice of sacrifice was involved in the construction of identity or social cohesion. Indeed, to posit that sacrifice was involved in the articulation of such social or ethical “systems” is distortive and apologetic, for this maneuver interpolates modern assumptions and ideals about religion into our ancient evidence where these are absent.

Third, I suggest that ancient Judean salvation religion, as evidenced by the Pauline epistles and Dead Sea Scrolls, represents an innovation on the basic assumptions and premises of ancient Mediterranean sacrificial-reciprocal religion. The salvation schemes of both corpora assume that prior to the human actions that angered God, the rendering of homage and service to him was sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the human-divine relationship. It is only in the contemporary situation of God’s wrath that humans should busy themselves with procuring their acquittal from the divine lawsuit and their salvation from divine punishments as opposed to offering sacrifices and other tokens of homage to him. Thus, in my view the “non-sacrificial” programs of the Pauline Epistles and Dead Sea Scrolls do not constitute evidence for a broader religious movement away from sacrifice or toward the “spiritualization” of sacrifice in the Second
Temple period. Indeed, the religious claims of these corpora represent only a relatively small conceptual step from the basic social assumptions of sacrificial-reciprocal religion. The initiatory practices of salvation religion seem to derive from the conceptual toolkit of Temple purification, only applied now to the essence of the initiate. The revelatory aspect of Judean salvation religion seems to have been adapted from textual practices and divinatory techniques associated with Judean holy texts in priestly contexts.

Finally, in my opinion it is infelicitous to describe the Judean religion of the Second Temple period as “covenantal nomism,” following E. P. Sanders’s proposal:

The “pattern” or “structure” of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The implies both (3) God’s promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God’s mercy belong to the group which will be saved.3

While Sanders marshals most of his evidence from tannaitic rabbinic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus, he hypothesizes that “covenantal nomism was pervasive in Palestine before 70. It was thus the basic type of religion known by Jesus and presumably by Paul.”4 To my mind, several aspects of Sanders’s approach are problematic. First, the characterization of biblical texts, especially the Pentateuch, as “the law,” which all Israelites were to obey, is misleading. The Pentateuch contains hundreds of regulations that pertain specifically, explicitly, and exclusively to the priesthood and the sacrificial cult of the Jerusalem Temple, and I would suggest that non-priestly Judeans would have

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3 Ed P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 422. Elsewhere Sanders summarizes covenantal nomism thus: “Briefly put, covenantal nomism is the view that one’s place in God’s plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing a means of atonement for transgression” [75].

4 Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 426. Emphasis in original.
had little stake or interest in such matters. Indeed, one might characterize the Pentateuch as an amalgam of conflicting priestly charter documents with some legal aspects, rather than a law code proper. As for those passages that do set forth criminal, civil, and religious laws, these largely overlap or correspond to other Greco-Roman laws and customs (i.e., do not murder, do not conduct business on a god’s special day, attend the festivals, offer first-fruits). In my opinion, obedience to such laws would have required little in the way of extraordinary obedience. Many other regulations pertain specifically to well-known Judean ethnic customs (circumcision, clothing and dietary practices, etc). I would suggest that the view of the Pentateuch as “the law” derives from the notional employment of biblical texts as the grounds for God’s indictment in Paul’s salvation scheme, rather than the actual content of Pentateuchal texts. Second, there is no evidence that Judeans who were not members of sotereological initiation cults such as those established by Paul and the communities attested in the Qumran documents 5 believed that there was any need to be “saved” from some imminent judgment. Third, there is likewise no evidence that Judeans who were not members of these exclusivist initiation cults called the status of the covenant between God and Israel into question; hence, it seems unlikely to me that the maintenance of the covenant specifically was a prime motivator for undertaking religious practices. Certainly sacrifices and the like were understood to accord with instructions set forth in Judean holy texts and to maintain ongoing relations with Yahweh, but these assumptions would have obtained in any ancient Mediterranean cult-site. Fourth, in my view Sanders’s assertion about the law’s provision for “means of atonement” proceeds from mistaken assumptions about the nature of expiatory sacrifices

5 I.e., the social formations referred to as “the New Covenant” and “the Community.”
and other rites of expiation.⁶ To be sure, Sanders’ hypothesis requires fuller treatment than is possible or appropriate here. Nevertheless, to this and other ends, I hope that this study will further the project of extricating ancient Judean religion and ancient Mediterranean religion more widely from the distorting and disfiguring intellectual constraints that have been imposed upon them by later interpreters and their religious interests and assumptions.

⁶ See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 168, “it should be emphasized that sacrifices and other cultic acts were not considered efficacious by themselves in a magical was, as if they had power. The question… was to what conditions God attached the promise of forgiveness. It is God who forgives and effects atonement. If he chooses to command sacrifices and other cultic acts, man is to seek atonement through those means.”
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