Aphrahat the Persian Sage and the Temple of God



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Aphrahat the Persian Sage and the Temple of God

A Study of Early Syriac Theological Anthropology

Stephanie K. Skoyles Jarkins



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PREFACE

This study of Aphrahat the Persian Sage comes at a time when Syriac studies is coming into its own as an area of scholarly interest. Syriac Patristic research is in many ways the poor cousin to the greater Greco-Roman studies in Patristics. Syriac studies has gone through waves of interest; the first wave in modern times was in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century with Gustav Bickell, Jacob Forget, Salomon Funk, Jean Parisot, Louis Ginzberg, Frank Gavin, Richard H. Connolly, and Francis C. Burkitt. The second wave of scholarship on Aphrahat was from the 1930s to the 1950s and was, by necessity, smaller, but no less important, with the writings of Freidrich Loofs, Mother Mary Maude, and Irénée Hausherr. The third wave is the larger one emanating from the writings of Robert Murray in the 1970s and Sebastian Brock in the 1980s through to the present. Today, the interest in Syriac studies is booming in comparison to previous decades. I am quite happy to be part of the expansion and promotion of Syriac studies to the English speaking reader.

My personal agenda is to show Aphrahat as the great theologian he is. My study focuses on Aphrahat's use of the temple image with side glances at other relevant authors and texts including Scripture, Second Temple Judaism, the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Liber Graduum*, the *Gospel* and *Acts of Thomas*, Ephrem the Syrian, and Macarius of Egypt. My book shows that Aphrahat is not a lone voice crying in the wilderness of the Persian Empire in the mid-fourth century. He uses ideas and themes with ancient lineage and he transmits them to his audience and to us. In my view, Aphrahat needs to be brought out from under the shadow of his younger contemporary Ephrem the Syrian; and my work in a very small way helps to do this. I also wish to show the Syriac Fathers as they are; a group of authors who can help modern people to deepen their understanding of the scriptures and spirituality.

Stephanie K. Skoyles Jarkins

May 2008, Ozark, Missouri

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Last and by no means least, my heartiest thanks go to Mrs. Leaella Shirley, my editor and friend. It is because of her many years of hard work and patience that I could do this. She is a magnificent editor and an even better friend. I can never fully repay the debt I owe her, except to say that any grammatical errors are mine and not hers. She did her level best to correct my many writing foibles. Thank you Leaella, you are a gem. Thank you one and all. Words are not enough to express my gratitude to all of you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABD Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David N. Freedman. New York:

Doubleday, 1992

ATR Anglican Theological Review, Evanston IL CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Washington, DC

CQR Church Quarterly Review, London

CSCO Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium, Edited by

I. B. Chabot et al. Paris, 1903-

Dem. Demonstration by Aphrahat
DSp Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Paris

HTR Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge MA

Hugoye Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature, Atlanta GA

JECS Journal of Early Christian Studies, Baltimore, MD

JJS Journal of Jewish Studies, London

JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago, IL

JSOR Journal of the Society of Oriental Research, Chicago, IL

JSQ Jewish Studies Quarterly, Tübingen JSS Journal of Semitic Studies, Manchester JTS Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford

NPNF Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers. Eds. Philip Schaff and Henry

Wace. Second Series. Vol. 13, Gregory the Great (II), Ephraim Syrus, and Aphrahat. Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1898;

Hendrickson, 1995

NovT Novum Testamentum, Leiden NTS New Testament Studies, Cambridge

OCA Orientalia christiana analecta

OCP Orientalia christiana periodica, Rome

OrChr. Oriens christianus, Wiesbaden

OTP The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Edited by James H.

Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983

ParOr. Parole de l'orient, Kaslik

Payne-Smith A Compendious Syriac Dictionary. Edited by J. Payne-Smith.

Oxford. 1903, Eerdmanns, 1996

POC Proche-orient chrétien, Jerusalem

APHRAHAT THE PERSIAN SAGE

RSR Recherches de Science Religieuse, Strasbourg

SC Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–

Sobornost Sobornost incorporating Eastern Churches Review, London

StPatr Studia Patristica, Leuven

SVTQ St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Crestwood, NY

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by G. Kittel

and G. Friederich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976

TDOT Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Edited by Gerhard J.

Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids,

1974- Eerdmans. 1995

TRE Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Edited by G. Krause and G.

Müller. Berlin, 1977-

TU Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der

altchristlichen Literatur, Leipzig

VC Vigiliae christianae, Amsterdam

ZNTW Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die

Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums, Berlin

TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

Following the system from the Journal *Hugoye*, the transliteration is:

- and the vowel shāshā is "u"
- ✓ and the vowel zkāpā is "ā"
- ≺ and the vowel *rbāshā* is "ē"
- and the vowel <u>bbāshā</u> is "i" the vowel <u>ptāhā</u> is "a"

^{&#}x27; b g d h w z \underline{h} \underline{t} y k l m n s c p \underline{s} q r sh t

INTRODUCTION

[The Sage] is a great temple for his Creator: and the King of the heights enters and dwells in him, raises his intellect to the heights and makes his thought soar to the sanctuary, revealing to him treasures of all kinds.

Aphrahat, Dem. Fourteen¹

מירש שם וכא הברטה היאר היוא כמ מלא ומכא: מרש למ לאובאת לומכא מכפוע מעיבתת לבית מהיישת מכעה למ אוא גבל אהע.

The longing to know the Divine is a universal desire. Sixteen hundred years ago the Persian bishop Aphrahat taught his flock that they could become temples of God, ascend to the heavenly temple and see God with the eyes of the heart. Heaven, or the heavenly temple, is not some closed off environment only experienced by the dead; it is accessible to the living holy people of God in Aphrahat's time, and I would posit, also to those who are alive today. The writings of Aphrahat the Sage are relevant because he presents his own personal experience of ascent to heaven as well as arguments from Scripture to explore this important mystical journey for the devout. This book contends that the image of the temple is the hinge of Aphrahat's theological anthropology; the image encompasses his christology, sacramentology, and ecclesiology. For Aphrahat, the celibate ascetic may become a divine temple and then ascend to the heavenly temple and see the throne of God itself. Aphrahat functions within the mystical milieu of the Second Temple Jewish Merkabah riders together with other Syriac Christian authors of his time. This work focuses upon one theme in Aphrahat's Demonstrations, the temple, and uses it as the lens through which to explain Aphrahat's theological anthropology and its relationship to Christian and Jewish mystical traditions. No one to date has written primarily on Aphrahat's temple

¹ D 14:35 (PS I/661:17–21).

theology and even his theological anthropology has received very little attention.

BIOGRAPHY

Little is known for certain about Aphrahat the Persian Sage except for his name, and even that is debated. S. Brock writes, "Nothing is known of the circumstances of [Aphrahat's] life; later tradition anachronistically made him into an abbot of the famous monastery of Mar Mattai near Mosul in north Iraq." Even though nothing is known, this does not stop the hypotheses from flying; if anything, it makes the figure of the author of the *Demonstrations* even more intriguing because of his elusiveness.

The only extant work of Aphrahat's is entitled *The Demonstrations* (fl. 337–345 C.E.), written in Syriac. This is a complete corpus of twenty-three discourses which are similar to sermons, or theological tractates. Demonstrations 1 through 10 were written in 337 C.E., Demonstrations 11 through 22 were written in 344 C.E., and finally, Demonstration 23 was written in 345 C.E. Aphrahat mentions the dates of his compositions in terms of the reign of the Persian King Shapur II and according to the reign of the Greeks.³ These demonstrations are organized acrostically. The first

² Sebastian P. Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987), 2.

³ Annotation of the *Demonstrations* will follow the common convention in Aphrahat studies for citation. The first number is the demonstration number and the second the section number. The sections were determined by William Wright who edited the first manuscripts and then were adapted by Joannes Parisot. The numbers in parentheses are from the *Patrologia Syriacum* text edited by Jean Parisot, *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes*, vol. 1 and 2 (Paris: Firmin-Didat et socii, 1894) and indicate volume, column, and line numbers. The / denotes the end of the line. Thus the following has two lines of Syriac text per line typed. All translations are by the author.

D 22:25 (PS I/1044.11–20): "I wrote the first ten [Demonstrations] in the six hundred and forty-eighth year of Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian's kingdom, as noted at the end of them. And these last twelve I wrote in the six hundred and fifty-fifth year of the kingdom of the Greeks and the Romans, which is Alexander's kingdom, and in the thirty-fifth year of the Persian King."

حلافلا عمني ميدي معالا عبلاء بالمعالية والمالاء والمعالدة المالاء الم

ten demonstrations are a pedagogical outline of the faith in which Aphrahat writes that:

These ten short books which I wrote to you borrow from one another and build on each other; do not separate them one from the other. I have written to you from 'Alaph' as far as 'Yod,' one letter following another. Read and learn, you and the brothers, covenanters and sons of our faith.⁴

His intended audience is the inquirer who wrote a note asking for some help in learning the actions of a faithful Christian and to his community who specifically include Covenanters or sons of the covenant who are a distinct ascetic group in the Syriac Christian church.⁵ The second group of twelve demonstrations (*Dem.* 11–13, 15–22) were written eight years later and have a far more apologetic tone, the community is persecuted by the Persians and there is strife between the Christians and the Jews. In these last demonstrations, Aphrahat moves from teacher to debater, he has outlined what he thinks his audience should do and say when confronted by questions and persecution. He is not merely a figurehead extolling virtues to his audience who are suffering; Aphrahat knew of and personally experienced the persecutions of Shapur II, the Sassanid Persian emperor.⁶

Shapur II wished to consolidate his domain, and he regarded the Christians within his empire as a threat because of their perceived loyalty to the Roman Empire. The ascetics received the brunt of the attacks, which

onth south over toyon taken the mine of my and the contract the sates of the hours and the sates of the order of the order

⁴ D 10:9 (PS I/464.24–465.4)

⁵ For more on the Covenanters, see page 82.

⁶ See Dem. 3:4–6, 5:1, and 14:7. Judah B. Segal, Edessa: The Blessed City (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 111 and David J. Lane, "Of Wars and Rumours of Peace: Apocalyptic Material in Aphrahat and Šubhalmaran," in New Heaven and New Earth Prophecy and the Millennium: Essays in Honour of Anthony Gelston, eds. P. J. Harlan and C. T. R. Hayward (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 231. For a discussion of the political pressures upon theological debate within Aphrahat's writings about the persecutions, see Jacob Neusner, "Constantine, Shapur II and the Jewish-Christian confrontation in fourth century Iran," in Religion, literature, and society in ancient Israel, formative Christianity and Judaism, vol. 2, New Perspectives on Ancient Judaism (Landham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 131–152.

started in 337 and 338 C.E., in the eighteenth year of Shapur's reign.⁷ The first phase of the persecutions was additional taxes levied upon the Christian inhabitants, including a double head tax on the ascetics.⁸ The second phase of persecution came with the destruction of Christian buildings. Buildings and furnishings were destroyed; Christians were harassed and killed. It was probably around 340 C.E. when the first Christians were murdered. The persecutions lasted for about a half century.⁹ All of Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* are produced during this very difficult time for the church, but the last half of the demonstrations, 11–23, are more concerned with surviving this tribulation than the first ten demonstrations, which are primarily apologetic pedagogical treatises.¹⁰ Since we can date his writings so exactly, in one case to the month in which it was written; Aphrahat is a reliable witness to these persecutions.

Two demonstrations do not fit into the two groups *Dems*. 1–10 and the second half (11–13, 15–22); these are *Dems*. 14 and 23. To take the last demonstration first, Dem. 23 was written in 345 C.E. a year after the other demonstrations. Aphrahat wrote it due to another request from his friend, this letter is now lost.¹¹ The topics of *Dem*. 23 are of judgement, blessing, and mercy. The tone is that of a man who is tired and older with final hopes of teaching his community what needs to still be done. His final paragraph of this his last Demonstration is:

I wrote this letter to you, my friend, in the month of August [Ab] in the six hundred and fifty-sixth year of Alexander's kingdom, Philip the Macedonian's son, and in the thirty-sixth year of Shapur, king of Persia, who has caused persecutions, and in the fifth year after the churches being demolished, and in the year in which there was a great ravaging of martyrs in the land of the east, after writing those twenty-two previous

⁷ This is according to the Acts of Zábina which claim to be an eye witness account by 'Eša'iá bar Hadrdībī. However, according to Vööbus, this text was compiled in Edessa and not in Persia. Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, vol. 2 (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus, 1958), 235.

⁸ Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 2, 238.

⁹ Neusner, Aphrahat and Judaism, 4.

¹⁰ Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 2, 239.

¹¹ D 23:1 (PS II/1.1–3) "I am writing to explain to you, [my] beloved friend, about the topics you asked of me, concerning that blessing which is hidden in the grape cluster."

אבלסב האנטים מביב, וענבא בל מלך וגא ומכבעו: בל מי בינים במלבים: בל מינים במלבים במלבים:

chapters, arranged alphabetically, one following the other. Read and learn, and remember your friend. The demonstration on the grapecluster is completed.¹²

Despite the persecutions and deaths, Aphrahat continues on with his work to write various treatises on the Christian faith to help his friend "the inquirer" and his community. One other demonstration in the collection does not fit within the two groups; Dem. 14 is a distinctly different treatise.

Although Demonstration Fourteen was written in the same year as the second group of Demonstrations (11–13, 15–22);¹³ it has a dissimilar audience and tone. Aphrahat's manner in *Dem.* Fourteen is that of an equal or superior to the bishops and clergy Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In his synodal letter, he writes with the authority to exhort improved behavior and he expects that they will listen and respond correctly. The opening of the demonstration has the salutation to "our brothers, well loved and very dear, the bishops, priests, deacons and all the Church, with all the children of the Church who are with you and all the people of God who are in Seleucia and Ctesiphon..." G. Nedungatt notes that there is "a focus on fraternal unity which is probably the solution for the vacant See due to Shapur's persecution in 341 and onwards." The evidence of the salutation, the concerns

εκεικ μν ν χικν ωτις, ειίω νε τευκ εκκνν ουκειν οτης εκτινους εναικό εκτινού εναικό εκτινού εκτινού

رعاد ماء کم بریمیمی بوری محموصه بریمیم و برید برماند؛ دوری محموم بریمیم بریدی موری از بریدی موری بریدی موری بری مورایمی بریمی بریمی

¹² D 23:69 (PS II/149.1–12)

¹³ D 14:50 (PS I/724.24–725.2) Aphrahat writes: "This letter is written in the month of Easter [Shebat], in year six hundred and fifty-five of the kingdom of Alexander son of Phillip the Macedonian, and in the thirty-fifth year of Shapur, king of Persia."

chich n Likh oith city set ist shown ourse, ourse retroko internitos et entreno caroun. ocsuk kliky ourse isten etan.

¹⁴ D 14:1 (PS I/573.7–11)

¹⁵ George Nedungatt, "The Authenticity of Aphrahat's synodal letter," OCP 46, 1 (1980), 69. For an old but still very thorough study of D 14 see Jacob Forget,

expressed, and the general tenor of *Dem.* Fourteen all suggest that Aphrahat was a bishop. ¹⁶ The whole corpus of *Demonstrations* has a great continuity in terms of the imagery used, especially when linked to the temple as a divine dwelling in a person; throughout the work Aphrahat uses similar ideas, scriptural supports, and themes to illuminate his arguments about the divine temple.

Part of the appeal of Aphrahat's writings is that they are written in somewhat simple Syriac and lack the Greek syllogisms and rhetorical splendor of his contemporaries to the West, for example the Cappadocians. Aphrahat has been commonly portrayed as a "pure Semite" whose works can aid the later generations to find Syriac theology without the taint of Hellenism.¹⁷ There appears to be a basic unarticulated scholarly assumption that the Persian Empire was a backwater where there was no news or influence from the West. Aphrahat's own writings debunk this idea. He even writes about Diocletian's persecutions of the Christians (303–312 C.E.):

Also for our brothers in the West, in the days of Diocletian came great suffering and persecution to all the church of God in all of their areas.

De Vita et Scriptis Aphraatis Sapientis Persae (Louvain: Catholic University, 1882), 130–223.

¹⁶ No one less than a bishop could get away with such a tongue lashing of the Seleucia-Ctesiphon leaders unless, of course, he was possibly an ascetic leader (similar to an abbot) and not a bishop. In any case, Aphrahat was an ascetic Christian leader who did not refrain from correcting all members of the church in spite of rank or stature.

¹⁷ Quispel writes of "the non-Greek theology of Aphraates." Gilles Quispel, "The Study of Encratism: A Historical Survey," in *La Tradizione Dell'Enkrateia: Motivazioni Ontologiche e Protologiche*, ed. Ugo Bianchi (Rome: Edizioni dell'ateneo, 1985), 58. Brock notes that the Greek language and culture influenced the Syriac world but Aphrahat and even Ephrem still: "preferred to write in an essentially Semitic mode." Sebastian P. Brock, "The Syriac Background to the World of Theodore of Tarsus," chap. in *From Ephrem to Romanos: Interactions Between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity*, Variorum Collected Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 30–53 III. See also Sebastian P. Brock, "Greek Words in Syriac: Some General Features," chap. in *From Ephrem to Romanos: Interactions Between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity*, Variorum Collected Studies (Jerusalem: 1996; Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 251–262 XVI.

Churches were destroyed and ruined; many people were declared confessors and martyrs.¹⁸

Even though these persecutions ended twenty five years before Aphrahat's first writings, the mention of them is evidence that he knew of events in the Western or Greek side of the empire. Aphrahat was not functioning in a complete vacuum. As R. Murray notes:

The purity of Aphrahat's language and idiom remains beyond question; but there is a danger of a kind of romanticism which neglects the degree to which the entire area where Syriac literature came to flower had for centuries been penetrated by Hellenistic cultural influence, in ways not resisted by linguistic barriers.¹⁹

Aphrahat does not have the rhetorical style of St. John Chrysostom, but the Sage's prose is very articulate and pleasing. His primary concern is pastoral edification within the context of his Christian community. The theology within his exhortative works is orthodox Christian, though it is not expressed in Greek philosophical terms.

Yet another appeal of the *Demonstrations*, beyond their value as a witness to early Syriac Christianity, is that they have a singularly good manuscript tradition which has portions originating a little over a hundred years after the last treatise was written.²⁰ The *Demonstrations* were translated into many different languages: Armenian, Ethiopic, and later into Latin, French, German, and English.²¹ The Armenian translation which was completed in

האב בל אתב הכביבא ביטבי הסבל מסא אמל ובער אמב ביטה האוצה הבלמ אמא ובבלת אמעונתם בי האמא היאא: האל במיא הממונים האונה ביואא: מאבעה אמבויא הממונים ביואא: מאבעה האונה ביואא:

¹⁸ D 21:23 (PS I/988.21-989.3)

¹⁹ Robert Murray, "Hellenistic-Jewish Rhetoric in Aphrahat," in *III Symposium Syriacum 1980*, *OCA* vol. 221, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1983), 79.

²⁰ MS "A" = (B.L. Add 14619) Sixth century. MS "B" / "<u>B</u>" = (B.L. Add 17182) which originated from 473 C.E. first part and 511 C.E. second part, following W. Wright's notations. Manuscript <u>B</u> has the scribal attestation to the author being "Mar Jacob, the Persian Sage." See Marie-Joseph Pierre, *Aphraate le Sage Persan: Les Exposés* (Paris: Éditions les Cerf, 1988–89), 40–42.

²¹ A complete English translation of the *Demonstrations* by Adam Lehto is due to be published by Paulist Press. In the meantime, one must look in at least three different books for translations of various demonstrations. A. E. Johnson translated Demonstrations 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 17, 21, 22 in *NPNF*, second series, vol. 13, ed.

the fifth century caused some confusion over Aphrahat's name because it attributes the *Demonstrations* to Mar Jacob the Sage. Later on, this attribution was confused with Jacob of Nisibis (d. 338 C.E.) who was a contemporary of Aphrahat.²² However, this could not be the same person, since fully half of the demonstrations were written after Jacob of Nisibis' death.

The name Aphrahat is the Syriac version of the Persian Farhad; the root in Persian means "perspicacious." Thus, Aphrahat the Persian Sage is actually redundant.²³ There is a martyr named Aphrahat in the martyrologies compiled in Syria before 412 C.E. Our Aphrahat the Persian Sage is likely not the Aphrahat mentioned in the martyrologies; it was a fairly common name in the area. Theodoret of Cyr in his History of the Syriac Fathers wrote that his mother took him to meet with an Aphrahat, but no mention is made of Aphrahat "the Sage." The author of the Demonstrations is always referred to as "the Sage." As M.-J. Pierre notes, it is tempting to identify Theodoret's Aphrahat with the Sage who wrote the Demonstrations, but the Demonstrations were written seventy-five years before Theodoret's meeting which was sometime before 416 C.E. It is possible that Aphrahat

P. Schaff and H. Wace (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 345–423. Sebastian P. Brock translated Demonstration Four with a very useful introduction and notes in *Syriac Fathers on Prayer*, 1–28. See Jacob Neusner's translation of Demonstrations 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, and parts of 23 in *Aphrahat and Judaism: The Christian-Jewish Argument in Fourth-Century Iran* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 19–119. Kuriakose A. Valavanolickal has published a simple English translation of the *Demonstrations* in *Aphrahat Demonstrations, Vol. 1* (Kerala: HIRS Publications, 2001).

One word of caution for those who do not know Syriac. Many of the English translations woefully neglect the greater liturgical and more ecclesiastical language which Aphrahat uses. For the most part English translations avoid any sacramental language or overtones of Christian ecclesiology. Since I argue that Aphrahat is a bishop or at least a very devout Christian, I have retained the more traditional Christian language with references to the eucharist and liturgy. See for example, D 23:61 (PS II/128) on page 62, and D 12:6 (PS I/516.19–517.4) on page 69.

²² Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan*, vol. 1, 46; and Edward J. Duncan, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates the Persian Sage* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 7.

²³ Pierre, Aphraate le sage persan, vol. 1, 37.

²⁴ Théodoret de Cyr, *Histoire des Moines de Syrie*, SC vol. 234, eds. Pierre Canivet and Alice Leroy-Molinghen (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1977), 373–405. English translation by Richard M. Price, "Aphrahat," in *Theodoret of Cyr, A History of the Monks of Syria* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Press, 1985), 72–79.

lived over one hundred years, but it is unlikely.²⁵ The evidence is inconclusive whether the *Demonstrations*' author is the same Aphrahat as Theodoret met. It is clear that the "Persian Sage" is the person responsible for the *Demonstrations*, and whether or not his name is Aphrahat or Jacob, it is ultimately of little consequence.

We also know very little about Aphrahat's background. Some scholars assume that Aphrahat had pagan parents. Scholars infer this from the following passages: "He [Jesus Christ] prohibited us from the custom of the pagans and of the Samaritans."26; and "They were jealous of us, and this is why they do not worship idols, so that we will not mock them, we who have left behind the idols and who call lies that which we inherited from our fathers."27 Aphrahat uses collective nouns in both cases, so he refers to the community as a whole rather than to his personal experience. The best evidence that he was of Persian and pagan heritage is his name, but this alone is inconclusive. J. Neusner assumes that Aphrahat was a pagan convert, born of Iranian parents.²⁸ G. G. Blum, contra Neusner, states that Aphrahat is of a Semitic, not Iranian heritage.²⁹ M.-J. Pierre comments that the evidence that Aphrahat was a pagan is plausible but not conclusive.³⁰ Moreover, it is possible that he was born a Christian and then became a prominent leader of his community. I presume that if his parents were pagan, one or both of them became Christian when Aphrahat was a child so they educated him or had him educated in the Christian texts very thoroughly. This presumption is based upon the Sage's extensive and complete knowledge of the scriptures and Christian tradition.

Aphrahat, as his title "the Sage" suggests, knew his scriptures extremely well and used them extensively in his writings. The composition of the Syriac canon in Aphrahat's time is unclear, but he did use the Law and the Prophets throughout his texts. The Gospel passages he cites suggest

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²⁵ Pierre, Aphraate le sage persan, vol. 1, 38.

²⁶ D 2:20 (PS I/92.14–15) . איז אווער געובא הגאביר אסוער איז אבריי

²⁷ D 16:7 (PS I/781.5–8)

²⁸ Neusner, Aphrahat and Judaism, 4.

²⁹ G. Krause, and G. Müller, eds. TRE. Vol. 1 (Berlin-New York: 1977), s.v. "Afrahat," by Georg G. Blum.

³⁰ Pierre, Aphraate le sage persan, vol. 1, 39.

that he knew both Tatian's *Diatessaron* and the separate Gospels.³¹ There is no question that the Sage knew Paul's epistles, and the Acts of the Apostles, since he often quotes verbatim from these texts.³² Although Aphrahat likely did not know 1 or 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude nor the Book of Revelation.³³

How Aphrahat acquired his scriptural education is unclear from the *Demonstrations*. R. Murray asserts that Aphrahat received his scriptural education "doubtless among the ascetical 'Sons of the Covenant." 'This is the most likely scenario given that part of the role of the sons of the Covenant (covenant bnay qyāmā) was to take care of the church and to teach the people who wanted to learn more about the Christian faith. ³⁵ It is certain that he was very well educated in the scriptures and quite articulate.

³¹ Aphrahat's scriptural canon is of great interest to many scholars. Some important studies are: Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan*, vol. 1, esp. 131–143; Tjitze Baarda, *Early Transmission of Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament* (Amsterdam: VU Boekhandel/Uitgeverij, 1983), 111–113; Robert J. Owens, *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983); *idem*, "Aphrahat as a witness to the early Syriac text of Leviticus," in *The Peshitta*, eds. P. B. Dirksen and M. J. Mulder (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 1–48; *idem*, "The Early Syriac text of Ben Sira in the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat," *JSS* 34, Spring (1989), 39–75; and Robert F. Shedinger, *Tatian and the Jewish scriptures: A Textual and Philological Analysis of the Old Testament Citations in Tatian's Diatessaron*, *CSCO* vol. 591 (Louvain: Peeters, 2001). A. Vööbus states that Aphrahat did not know the *Diatessaron* and uses only the separate gospels. This is not the majority view of the scholarly world today. Arthur Vööbus, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac*, CSCO vol. 128, (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste 1951), 42.

³² F. H. Woods, "Homilies of Aphrahat and Acts of Karpus," *The Classical Review* 3, 10 (Dec, 1889): 458.

³³ After I conducted an extensive search for any reference to 1 Peter 2:4–5, I was obliged to conclude that Aphrahat did not know this epistle. 1 Peter 2:4–5 has many motifs which Aphrahat uses throughout his writings, but there is no use of the phrase "living stones" anywhere in the *Demonstrations*. These lacunae in Aphrahat's scriptural canon mean that this powerful passage linking the spiritual temple and holy priesthood to the individual Christian believer was not known in so many words by Aphrahat. 1 Peter 2:4–5 "Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

³⁴ Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975; reprint, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 22.

³⁵ The phrase "Sons of the Covenant" is discussed further on page 82.

Another question brought up by the scholarly community is whether Aphrahat was the abbot of Mar Mattai.³⁶ This is suggested by an emendation to the C manuscript dated 1364 C.E. At the end of *Dem.* Twenty-three a colophon reads, "With the help of God, we write the Demonstration of the Grapecluster, of Aphrahat the Sage or Jacob, Bishop of Mar Mattai."³⁷ According to I. Hausherr, this is an anachronistic appellation.³⁸ J. Neusner, on the other hand, writes "The first great father of the Iranian church, Aphrahat, a monk of the rank of bishop at Mar Mattai [...]."³⁹ R. Murray concurs with J. Neusner stating that Aphrahat could be the prelate of Mar Mattai.⁴⁰ The *Demonstrations* allow us to deduce that the author has great pastoral concerns for his community, but the presumption that he was an "abbot" is untenable.

Although we cannot conclude that Aphrahat was abbot of Mar Mattai, there are many other tantalizing tidbits we may tease out of his writings. Our author was likely a member of the *Bnay Qyāmā*, or Sons of the Covenant.⁴¹ This distinct group of ascetics had a very important ecclesiastical

The term "monk" in reference to Aphrahat has come under heavy scrutiny because of various concerns over the date of origin for monasticism in the modern sense in the Ancient Near East. Classic monasticism, as it is commonly conceived, developed in Egypt under St. Anthony and St. Pachomius at the turn of the fourth century. It is assumed that Egyptian monasticism did not reach and influence Syria until the late fourth century, in other words, after Aphrahat's time. Rather than dealing with this large and somewhat complex issue, the term "monk" within the context of Aphrahat's writings will be eschewed.

Although the term "monk" cannot be used for Aphrahat, it must be noted that all the ideas of dedication, prayer, asceticism, and service to the church are hall-marks of monasticism. There is little disjoint between the role of the Covenanters at this time and the monk's role later in Syriac tradition, as is shown further in Chapter 2 of this work, see page 73. Perhaps future research will support the view that monasticism developed concurrently in Egypt and Syria.

³⁶ Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism*, 4 and Stephen D. Benin, "Commandments, Covenants, and the Jews in Aphrahat, Ephrem, and Jacob of Sarug," in *Approaches to Judaism in medieval times* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 136.

³⁷ Pierre, Aphraate le sage persan, vol. 1, 35.

³⁸ Marcel Viller, ed. *DSp.* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1937), s.v. "Aphraate," by Irénée Hausherr.

³⁹ Jacob Neusner, "Aphrahat on Celibacy," *Judaica* 28 (1972): 117.

⁴⁰ Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 29.

⁴¹ Robert Murray, "The Features of the Earliest Christian Asceticism," in *Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp*, ed. Peter Brooks (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1975), 69 and Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 226.

role within the Syriac church. *Dem.* Six, "On the Sons of the Covenant," is filled with advice to these ascetics. He urges his audience to right action in a familiar manner which suggests that he himself was a fellow Covenanter. The hortatory passage of *Dem.* 6:1, beginning with "Let us [...]," illustrates his pastoral concerns for his persecuted community.

Aphrahat, a Syriac Christian cleric, writing in the fourth century C.E. was a mystic who wrote using terminology from the same mystical thought as the Second Temple Jewish mystical writers with a focus on *Merkabah* or the Chariot ascending to heaven. Therefore, a quick review of secondary scholarship in the area of Jewish and Syriac Christian connections will help to illuminate the importance of mystical themes found in Second Temple Jewish literature and Aphrahat. Early scholars found numerous striking similarities between Aphrahat's exegesis and passages in the Babylonian Talmud and other rabbinic writings. Many scholars characterize his scriptural use as "midrashic." Midrash can be defined as a rabbinic statement

⁴² In the early years of Aphrahat studies, he was commonly assumed to be a "docile pupil of the Jews." Ginzberg's assessment was based primarily on the work of Funk who found that there were approximately thirty four passages in Aphrahat which had parallels within the *Haggadah*. Salomon Funk, *Die Haggadischen Elementen in den Homilien des Aphraates, des persischen Weisen* (Vienna: Inaugural-Dissertation, 1891). See Isidore Singer and Cyrus Alder, eds. *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: 1901), s.v. "Aphraates, the Persian Sage," by Louis Ginzberg. Gavin continues in this vein with his influential article in which he concludes that: "Aphraates is peculiarly at one, in the idiom of his thought and the perspective of his field, with contemporary Rabbinic Judaism. Where he diverged, he only recombined elements taken from the Rabbis to reassemble them into the contour of a mosaic of a Christian character." Frank Gavin, "Aphraates and the Jews," *JSOR* VII (1923): 152.

Later scholars refined this view to suggest that he was a Christian writer who was steeped in Jewish or Jewish-Christian traditions. See John S. Luttrell, "The influence of Babylonian Judaism on Aphrahat the Persian Sage (Ph.D. diss., HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH, 1977), esp. 53–70. Luttrell compared D 18 with *Baraitha Midrash* on Exod 19:14, folio 61b and 62a. He notes that Aphrahat and the Rabbis used the same technical exegetical devices, "light to heavy" or the deduction from a minor to a major principle. Luttrell, 63. There is a strong scholarly desire to avoid "parallelomania" so thematic analyses are more common. See Sebastian P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," *JJS* 30 (1979): 212–232. Vööbus argues that there are Targumic touches to Aphrahat's use of the Hebrew scriptures. His theological traditions and terminology are taken from Jewish thought. Arthur Vööbus, "Aphrahat," in *Nachträge zum Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum (1960): 154. Guillaumont suggests that both Aphrahat and Ephrem knew some of the Palestinian Targums and separately followed the inter-

coupled with a quotation from scriptures.⁴³ It is a type of biblical interpretation which is found in the Jewish biblical commentaries containing many inter-textual referents from among different books of scripture. Aphrahat functions within this interpretative context. As R. Murray and E. Rolle both note, there are some similarities between Aphrahat's presentations and a few midrashic themes.⁴⁴ If the term "midrash" is solely limited to Jewish rabbinic statements, then Aphrahat's texts would be excluded. But his style of interpretation is closely aligned to the Jewish tradition with his extensive interweaving of various scriptural texts and ideas to address the difficulties of his time and audience.

The common ground between Aphrahat and his Jewish contemporaries is based upon their similar language, geography, and interpretation of common scriptures. As H. W. J. Drijvers comments:

pretation of Exodus 4:24–26 from that source. Antoine Guillaumont, "Un midrash d'Exode 4, 24–26 chez Aphraate et Ephrem de Nisibe," in *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus*, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1977), 89–96.

On the whole, we will avoid using the term "Jewish-Christian" given that it is extremely vague. The term is used by those who are following in Jean Daniélou's footsteps, with Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958). It defines a common category term for those early Christians who seem to be more Jewish than either their enemies or their scholarly interlocutors would like. For a review of the various issues and scholarly debates involved with this term see especially Robert Murray, "Jews, Hebrews and Christians: Some Needed Distinctions," NovT XXIV, 3 (1982): 194-208. See also Lesie W. Barnard, "The Early Roman Church, Judaism, and Jewish-Christianity," ATR 49 (1967): 371-384; Georg Strecker, "On the Problem of Jewish Christianity," in Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, eds. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971; Garland, 1993), 241–285; Stanley K. Riegel, "Jewish Christianity: Definitions and Terminology," NTS 24 (1977/78): 410-415; Jarl E. Fossum, "Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism," VC 37 (1983): 260-287; Hans J. W. Drijvers, "Jews and Christians at Edessa," JJS XXXVI, 1 (Spr 1985): 88-102; and Simon Mimouni, "Le Judéo-Christianisme Syriaque: Mythe Littéraire ou Réalité Historique?" VI Symposium Syriacum 1992. OCA Vol. 247, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pont. Istituto Orientale, 1994), 269–279.

⁴³ Albert van der Heide, "Midrash and Exegesis," in *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation*, eds. Judith Frishman and Lucas van Rompay (Louvain: 1997), 44.

⁴⁴ Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 54 and Elizabeth Rolle, "Aphrahat and the rabbis on monotheism and anthropomorphism" (PhD diss., Hebrew Union College., 1981), 69.

Pagans, Jews and Christians did not live in splendid isolation in an antique town in which a good deal of life was lived in public, and privacy was an almost unknown concept. Ideological conflicts and struggles like those between Christians, Jews and pagans found their origin in daily experiences of different religious, and consequently social, behaviour because religion in the ancient world was mainly a matter of public conduct according to traditional standards.⁴⁵

Aphrahat and his fellow Christians were not hermetically sealed away from any influence or interaction with their Jewish neighbors. As the Sage's own polemical writings show, he was addressing arguments between his audience and the Jews about circumcision, Passover, Sabbath, being the chosen people of God, the Messiah, celibacy, asceticism, charity, and persecution.⁴⁶

Who these Jews were precisely cannot be determined exactly from Aphrahat's side of the argument. Yet Aphrahat was living at the same time as the sages of the Talmud and the time of the *Hekhalot Zutarti* or the *Lesser Hekhalot* compilation.⁴⁷ According to J. Neusner and E. Rolle, Aphrahat did not know any Palestinian Jews nor rabbinic Jews as we understand them today.⁴⁸ Neusner suggests that the Jews Aphrahat knew were Adiabene Jews who had little or no contacts with Babylonian rabbis.⁴⁹ But as E. Rolle notes:

The fact that present day scholarship is unaware of the Judaism best known to Aphrahat does not mean that it did not exist any more than

⁴⁵ Drijvers, "Jews and Christians at Edessa," 89.

⁴⁶ See the following demonstrations for Aphrahat's more polemical arguments against the Jews: D 11 "On Circumcision," D 12 "On Passover," D 13 "On the Sabbath," D 15 "On the Avoidance of Food," D 16 "On the People in place of the People," D 17 "On Christ, who is the Son of God," D 18 "Against the Jews, concerning Virginity and Holiness," D 19 "Demonstration 19: Against the Jews, who say that they will yet be gathered together," D 20 "On the Support of the Poor," and D 21 "On Persecution." English translations and discussion of these demonstrations are available in Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism*, 19–122.

⁴⁷ Stephen D. Benin, *The Footprints of God: Divine Accommodation in Jewish and Christian Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 134.

⁴⁸ Neusner notes that: "Aphrahat and the rabbis had practically nothing in common, other than they lived in a single cultural continuum and believed in the same revelation." Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism*, 188. See also Rolle, "Aphrahat and the rabbis," 3 and 79.

⁴⁹ Neusner, Aphrahat and Judaism, 148–149.

the fact that the literature of Aphrahat's day does not mention him means that he did not exist!⁵⁰

Aphrahat's presentation of his Jewish opponents is imprecise, so his contact may have been indirect.⁵¹ I am of the opinion that Aphrahat had a personal contact with some leaders of the Jewish community in his area, though to what extent and how intimately we cannot know.⁵² As Drijvers concludes: "Ephrem Syrus' works like those of Aphrahat and Origen in the third century reflect Jewish learning and actual discussions on theological matters with Jewish rabbis and scribes."53 N. Koltun-Fromm's research into various common themes between Aphrahat and the rabbis shows that: "These textual correspondences attest to some sort of cross fertilization, though it is difficult to say how, when or in which direction."54 J. Snaith summarizes the situation as: "His [Aphrahat's] contact with Jews was therefore on an unofficial, informal basis, and I suspect that the 'Jewish debater' sums up in his person any number of acquaintances."55 Aphrahat does not write of how he could have learned about his Jewish neighbors, their traditions, and exegesis. He may have had a Jewish teacher, some rabbi of his acquaintance, or he may be using common ideas from his Christian Syrian church which had very strong and deep Jewish roots, or he may have learned some of the

⁵⁰ Rolle, "Aphrahat and the rabbis," 96.

⁵¹ J. B. Segal suggests Aphrahat had a second-hand knowledge of the Targum and Talmud. Segal, *Edessa*, 100. R. Murray notes that "The Christians in Mesopotamia lived at the door of the Jews like poor relations not on speaking terms." Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 19.

⁵² Ouellette notes that Aphrahat probably knew some Mesopotamian Jews, although he does not show any acquaintance with any famous Jews. Jean Ouellette, "Sens et Portée de l'argument Scripturaire chez Aphraate," in *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus*, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1977), 191.

⁵³ Drijvers, "Jews and Christians at Edessa," 100

⁵⁴ Naomi Koltun-Fromm, "Sexuality and Holiness: Semitic Christian and Jewish Conceptualizations of Sexual Behavior," VC (Leiden) 54 (2000): 390. See also her doctoral dissertation: Naomi Koltun, "Jewish-Christian polemics in fourth century Persian Mesopotamia: a reconstructed conversation" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1994).

⁵⁵ John G. Snaith, "Aphrahat and the Jews," in *Interpreting the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of EIJ Rosenthal*, eds. John A. Emerton and Stefan C. Reif (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 250.

ideas from his fellow Christians who were having debates with the Jews in the area.

The demonstrations which are deemed anti-Jewish and polemical, Dems. 11–21, are by far the most studied of his writings; they have been translated into English and many scholars have written about his irenic, for a Christian Patristic writer, but constant stance against the perceived threat of the Jews.⁵⁶ The more mystical aspects of Aphrahat's writings, for example, ascent to heaven and the heavenly temple, have been almost wholly ignored.⁵⁷ The connection between Aphrahat and his Jewish compatriots is primarily through the Peshitta which retained interpretations from the Palestinian Targums⁵⁸ and, I contend, secondarily through a common mystical view based upon Isaiah 66, the Merkabah ascent tradition and other "apocalyptic" traditions. Even though Aphrahat was writing to his Christian community to teach them how to debate with their Jewish interlocutors, the spiritual or even mystical traditions of his community are crucial to his message. His dual purpose of pedagogy and polemic are often confused in secondary scholarship-but Aphrahat's pastoral goal of exhortation to his flock is never lost throughout his twenty-three demonstrations.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The prime concern of this study is the imagery of the temple. So a quick review of the exact words Aphrahat uses for temple throughout his work is

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⁵⁶ Some articles about Aphrahat's interaction with the Jews of his community are: Klaus Deppe, "Die Rolle des Alten Testaments im Streit zwischen Christen und Juden nach dem Zeugnis Afrahats," *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen*, vol. 1, ed. G. Wiesner (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973), 83–107; Adam Becker, "Anti-Judaism and Care for the Poor in Aphrahat's Demonstration 20," *JECS* 10, 3 (2002): 305–327; and S. Benin, "Commandments," 135–156.

⁵⁷ Of course, this theme has not been ignored by Robert Murray, Alexander Golitzin, and me. See Robert Murray, "Some themes and problems of early Syriac angelology," *Symposium Syriacum V, 1988 OCA* vol. 236 (René Lavenant; Rome: Pontifical Institute Studium Orientalium, 1990), 143–153; Alexander Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men': The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Niketas Stethatos, and the Tradition of Interiorized Apocalyptic' in Eastern Christian Ascetical and Mystical Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001), 125–153; *idem*, "The Place of the Presence of God: Aphrahat of Persia's Portrait of the Christian Holy Man," chap. in *Synaxis Evcharistias: Charisteria eis timen tou Gerontos Aimilianou* (Athens: Indiktos, 2003), 391–447.

⁵⁸ Brock, "Jewish Traditions," 231.

in order. Payne-Smith defines the Syriac word for temple, κα (hayklā), as: "a palace, a temple." The two meanings are interchangeable for the most part; a place where the king resides can be either a palace or a temple. Aphrahat uses the term to mean both temple and palace, but temple is the more salient definition. An important synonym for hayklā is κωω (namsā), from the Greek root ναός, meaning a temple or shrine. In all of his writings, Aphrahat uses namsā only once, in Dem. 23:59: "You [God] have called us your temples and your majesty walks in us [...]." Aphrahat could have replaced namsā with hayklā without a change of meaning but from the context of the full passage he likely used namsā to avoid repeating himself. Namsā occurs far more frequently in other Syriac literature, for example The Acts of Thomas and Ephrem's writings. The synonyms for hayklā which

⁵⁹ Robert Payne-Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. Jessie Payne-Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903; Eerdmanns, 1996), 103.

⁶⁰ Aphrahat uses *hayklā* and its cognates over thirty times in his *Demonstrations*. The specific citations are: D 1:3 (9.2–8), D 1:5 (13.19), D 3:2 (101.19), D 4:10 (157.22–23), D 5:7 (197.3), D 5:20 (221.10), D 5:22 (228.9), D 6:1 (252.11), D 6:10 (280.22), D 6:11 (284.5), D 6:14 (292.19), D 6:15 (297.17), D 9:4 (416.3), D 9:7 (421.24), D 12:8 (524.22 and 525.3), D 13:12 (569.2), D 14:28 (645.20), D 14:35 (661.17), D 14:38 (680.13), D 17:6 (796.1), D 17:7 (800.8–9), D 21:4 (941.2), D 21:5 (945.20), D 21:17 (972.16–20), D 23:47 (II/92.25), and D 23:59 (II/121.13). Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from Parisot's first volume of *Patrologia Syriaca*.

⁶¹ Payne-Smith, 333.

⁶² Syr. Rima nawsye.

⁶³ D 23:59 (PS II/121.14) مناهم : مصلحه حالم المرابعة ال

⁶⁴ See discussion of D 23:59 in Chapter Five, page 142.

⁶⁵ See discussion Ephrem, page 93. The Acts of Judas Thomas are an apocryphal collection of stories which was originally composed in Syriac, likely in the third century C.E., and translated into Greek, Latin, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Armenian. If we are to follow Klijn's conclusions, the Acts may come from an Edessan Jewish or Christian environment, with both Jewish and Hellenistic ideas present. While this text earned a questionable reputation in the Latin West, the Acts continued to be accorded esteem by the Syrian church, though with some editing. See A. F. J. Klijn's translation entitled The Acts of Thomas (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 13, 20, and 53. William Wright, Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, vol. 1: The Syriac Texts. (London, 1871), 172–333 and vol. II: The English Translation (London 1871), 146–298. For the Greek version see André-Jean Festugière, Les Actes Apocryphes de Jean et de Thomas: Traduction Française et Notes Critiques (Cahiers d'Orientalisme 6; Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1983).

refer to a dwelling place or home are far more numerous and important for Aphrahat than any palace related words.⁶⁶

A closely related term to temple within Aphrahat's work is (ma*mrā) dwelling-place, a dwelling or an abode. When combined with the word for single ones (ihidayē) it may also mean a monastery. (ihidayē) it m

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⁶⁶ Aphrahat uses *hayklā* once in reference to the Babylonian King's palace. See D 5:7 (PS I/197.3) "And if you boast about your sons, they will be led away from you to the beast, like the sons of king Hezekiah were led away and became eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." (2 Kings 20:12–19; Isaiah 39:1–8)

⁶⁷ Payne-Smith, 289.

⁶⁸ Syr. محلت hayklā.

 $^{^{69}}$ D 1:3 (PS I/8.25–9.2) See page 30 for the full quotation.

⁷⁰ See Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *TDNT* trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976), s.v. "οίκος," by Otto Michel. See also, Gerhard J. Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds. *TDOT* trans. J. T. Willis and G. W. Bromily, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), s.v. "בית" by H. A. Hoffner.

The person as the house of God is very common within the *Demonstrations*. See, for example, D 6:17 (PS I/301.17–304.19). In this passage Aphrahat has an extended analogy with the person being the house of God, until through wrong action, the person becomes the house for Satan, see page 126. A second passage is D 9:9 (PS I/429.2–4) in which Aphrahat writes that the humble person may become the 'house of dwelling for the Messiah' (אוני ביאל אוני ביאל ביאל bayt ma'mrā lmashihā). In one of Aphrahat's accounts of a sage ascending to the heavens he refers to the holy person as both a temple and a holy house or sanctuary, D 14:35 (PS I/661:17–21), see page 1.

for us dispersed and for us plundered."⁷² The image of a house applies to both the individual person as well as the collective churches of Aphrahat's community.

Aphrahat uses many synonyms for the temple including a house for sheep, (dayrā). The term dayrā or dwelling place occurs only five times throughout the *Demonstrations*. It occurs three times in conjunction with "sons of his dwelling" and twice alone. 73 This term is used for monasteries approximately a century after Aphrahat. 74 The temple is the most important term, but the many synonyms, including dwelling-place, house, and sheepfold, also factor into his divine indwelling imagery.

The Greek terms for temple most often used in the NT are ναός (temple building itself)⁷⁵ or ἱερόν (entire sacred compound).⁷⁶ Jesus himself drew the connection between the Jerusalem temple and his own body in John 2:21. Paul drew a direct connection between the temple and human body which Aphrahat uses as one of his primary scriptural sources for his

⁷² D 23:53 (PS II/105.21–27)

⁷³ *Dayrā* is used in D 10:2 (PS I/448.13) within the context of Joshua son of Nun, who gave the sheep their sheepfold and in D 22:13 (PS I/1020.18–19).

⁷⁴ See too D 14:39 (PS I/684.7), D 14:41 (PS I/692.24) for other references to 'sons of his dwelling' (בנ; הגיס bnay dayreh). Payne-Smith, 91; Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 229. Vööbus notes that Rabbula uses the term dayrā to refer to his monastery. Arthur Vööbus, Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism (Stockholm: Etse, 1960), 27. See also Shafiq AbouZayd, Ihidayutha: A Study of the Life of Singleness in the Syrian Orient. From Ignatius of Antioch to Chalcedon 451 A.D. (Oxford: ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, 1993), 308.

⁷⁵ Key citations with ναός *naos* are 1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21.

⁷⁶ Key citations with ἱερόν hieron are: Matt 12:6 "I tell you, something greater than the Temple (ἰερόν) is here." In this passage Jesus explains that the priests do not profane the Sabbath when they work. The rest of the ἱερόν texts refer in the simplest sense to the Jerusalem Temple: i.e. Jesus' temptation and the cleansing of the Temple. See Ethelbert W. Bullinger, "Temple," A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 1975), 764.

Even though in the Greek there is a distinction between ἱερόν and ναός, in the Syriac *Peshitta* translation both terms are rendered with the same term Δωσ haykal. See the *Peshitta* of 1 Cor 3:16, 17; 2 Cor 6:16; and Matt 12:6. George A. Kiraz, ed. "Δωσ hekal," Concordance to the Syriac New Testament, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 767–770.

temple imagery (cf. 1 Cor 3:9–17, 1 Cor 6:19 and 2 Cor 2:17). Jesus' own life centered largely around the rituals of the temple: his birth was announced in the temple (Luke 1:17; 2:27–32), he was presented in the temple when he was eight days old (Luke 2:46), he taught in the temple (John 7:14) and cleansed it (Mark 11:17 and parallels). Aphrahat writes throughout his *Demonstrations* that the believer is only called the temple of God because Christ himself is the temple and the believer participates in Christ.

In the Sage's hands, temple and its various cognates represent a multitude of meanings, ranging from the simple—references to the physical building of the Jerusalem temple—to the more complex, temple is the Christ dwelling within a person. Temple, tabernacle, abode, sheepfold, treasury and habitation, all have a common underlying sense, meaning something or someone special is resting within a place. This place may be a locale on earth or it may be within the human heart. All the various layers of meaning weave together within the term temple, so it is for this reason that we may continue with this work examining the facets of Aphrahat's temple imagery.

Aphrahat's theological anthropology involves a mystic who becomes a divine temple and then may ascend to heaven. Within this rather simple statement there are various important concepts which need clarification; these concepts are: apocalypse, ascent, mysticism, *Merkabah*, and *hekhalot*. The first term is "apocalypse" which also involves the congates apocalyptic and apocalypticism.

The literal meaning of "apocalypse" is the revelation of concealed things, from the Greek ἀποκαλύπτω.⁷⁷ The most famous text with the self

⁷⁷ The term *apokalyptō* as a verb was used in Greek literature without any reference to a divine element in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. and then fell out of common use. It was popular again in the second century B.C.E. and later. G. Kittel, ed. TDNT, s.v. "καλύπτω," by Albrecht Oepke. For corrections and expansions Oepke's Morton Smith, "On the article, see A Π OKA Λ Y Π T Ω and A Π OKA Λ Y Ψ I Σ ," in Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1983), 9-20. In the Jewish literature, the verb is used both literally and figuratively to describe how God relates to His creation. Smith, "On the History," 13. In the New Testament, it is used four times in relation to revealing secrets, (Matt 10:26/Luke 12:2; Matt 11:25/Luke 10:21; Matt 16:27; and Luke 2:35) and two times about revealing God (Matt 11:27/Luke 10:22). The only time the verb is used within an eschatological context is Luke 17:30 "so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed." The Christian use of the term is very similar to the Jewish use.

appellation of apocalypse is the Apocalypse of John in the New Testament.⁷⁸ For the most part, the Jewish and early Christian apocalypse literature dates from the Second Temple period. These texts encompass literature from the Enochic books to Daniel to various pseudepigraphical texts with "apocalypse" in the title, including some of the Qumran library and, of course, many Christian texts.⁷⁹ The apocalypses were an essential literary

Theories abound about the origins of apocalyptic literature, together with Persian influence, to Ugaritic-Canaanite sources through to a more "general" Mesopotamian tradition. See the following for more on the apocalyptic origins: Paul D. Hanson, "Prolegomena to the Study of Jewish Apocalyptic," in Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God, eds. Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller, Jr. (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 395. J. Vander-Kam suggests that rather than an either/or situation with prophetic or wisdom traditions being the sources for apocalyptic literature, it is more accurately a both/and situation. See James C. VanderKam, "The Prophetic-Sapiential Origins of Apocalyptic Thought," chap. in From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 241-254. See also David N. Freedman, ed. ABD, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), s.v. "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism," by Paul Hanson and John J. Collins; James C. VanderKam, Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series vol. 16, (Washington, D.C: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 179-190; Helge S. Kvanvig, Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament Vol. 61 (Vlugen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), 319-342 and 603-613; and Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T&T Clark, 2003), esp. 5-16.

⁷⁸ Aphrahat does not quote from the book of Revelation and it was not universally received by the church until centuries later, although Athanasius of Alexandria has it in his canonical list in 367 C.E. Portions of Athanasius' Festal Letter XXXIX, is extant in Greek, Coptic, and Syriac, (see PG 26.1434–1440; English translation in Athanasius, Select Writings and Letters NPNF Second Series. Vol. 4, trans. Archibald Robertson (Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1892; reprint Hendrickson, 1995), 552; and S. Athanase, Lettres Festales et Pastorales en Copte, CSCO vol. 151 Scr. Coptici vol. 20, ed. L.-Theophile Lefort (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1955), 37). See also Timothy D. Barnes' discussion about the Festal Letters and their dating problems in Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993; reprint Harvard University Press, 2001), 183–191.

⁷⁹ For example, the Apocalypse of Abraham, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah and the Apocalypse of Paul to name but a few. See the following for translations of some texts: James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (New

vehicle for mystical sentiments and had great influence on Christian literature including, I contend, Aphrahat and later Jewish literature for example the *Hekhalot Rabbati* and the *Merkabah Rabbah*.⁸⁰

The assorted and mostly anonymous communities who produced apocalypses were diverse in time, culture, language, and religion. One cannot generalize as to the mindset of the authors nor can one assume that all communities who had apocalypses within their respective libraries were marginalized, persecuted or suffering.⁸¹ As C. Rowland notes: "The apocalyptic tradition is not tied to one particular social stratum." Aphrahat wrote most of his more apocalyptic and mystical texts later in life during the persecutions of Shapur II.⁸³ Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* are not apocalypses,

York: Doubleday, 1983) and James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

⁸⁰ Michael E. Stone, "Apocalyptic Literature," chap. in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 435–436. See also John J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Literature," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. Robert A. Kraft and G. W. E. Nickelsburg (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 345–363.

⁸¹ The destruction of the first Jerusalem Temple and later, the Second Temple, is suggested as a prime motivating factor for the development of apocalyptic literature. It may be true that communities who have lost their place to commune with God may think that they have reached the end times, but it does not mean that all apocalyptic literature is at essence pessimistic about the present. Aphrahat's apocalyptic passages are hopeful for both the future and the present. See especially Ithamar Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988), 129.

82 Christopher C. Rowland, "Apocalyptic Literature," in It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture, eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 184.

83 Syrian Christian apocalypses have not been extensively examined, though F. J. Martinez did attempt to argue that there is "an indigenous Syriac apocalyptic tradition, irreducible to concepts like 'early' or 'late' Christian apocalypticism." His collection of apocalypses examined are for the most part seventh century C.E. and he chose them specifically to support his thesis. He does include Ephrem's Mēmrā on the Last Judgment for a fourth century example but he ignores Aphrahat's writings. He uses Aphrahat, but only to discuss the issue in terms of the Persians and the Babylonians in Demonstration 5, "On the Wars." See Francisco Javier Martinez, "The Apocalyptic Genre in Syriac: the World of Pseudo-Methodius," *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, *OCA* vol. 229, eds. Hans J. W. Drijvers and René Lavenant (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), 337–352.

but rather, they have apocalyptic imagery and some ideas which involve direct divine revelation to a person during the heavenly ascent.

Ascent or apocalyptic ascent is a person's journey to another realm, not on earth, and then one returns to earth to teach what has been learned. This journey may be done solely through the intellect ascending as Aphrahat usually writes, or corporeally as Enoch was written to have done.84 Aphrahat writes of an ascent by a person who has become a divine temple in the quotation from the beginning of our introduction:

[The Sage] is a great temple for his Creator: and the King of the heights enters and dwells in him, raises his intellect to the heights and makes his thought soar to the sanctuary, revealing to him treasures of all kinds. (Dem. 14:35)

This passage is one of four key passages addressed later in this work with descriptions of various people ascending to the heavens.85 Some of the people who ascend are: Moses, unnamed sages, and Aphrahat himself. Aphrahat is one of the elite who are able to see and communicate his vision of the heavenly throne to his audience. J. Reeves defines the literary genre of apocalyptic writings with an emphasis upon the sharing of knowledge with the uninitiated.

The type of knowledge that is communicated in apocalyptic writings is fundamentally esoteric: its content, character, and essential qualities lie concealed from most members of the social order and rely for their wider dissemination on the willingness of those privileged to receive such knowledge to share it with a broader public.86

Aphrahat's own writings are a testament to this goal, even though the Demonstrations are sermons they have many apocalyptic aspects to them. A description of an ascent to heaven fits well within the area of mystical thought or even has some aspects of "mysticism" to it.

The term "mysticism" or "mystical" are words which are nebulous and laden with many different suppositions and assumptions.87 J. Fossum's

84 See 1 Enoch discussion, p. 168.

⁸⁵ See Chapter 4 for a full discussion of ascent in Aphrahat's writings, p. 189. 86 John C. Reeves, Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Post Rabbinic Jewish

Apocalypse Reader (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 2

⁸⁷ A useful article for terminology and possible categories of mysticism is Karl-Erich Grozinger, "Types of Jewish Mysticism and their Relation to Theology and Philosophy," in Expérience et Écriture Mystiques dans les Religions du Livre, eds. Paul B.

definition of mysticism within the context of apocalypticism is helpful for our study, since within Aphrahat's work it is difficult to distinguish between the mystical and apocalyptic aspects. According to Fossum:

Mysticism is 'vertical' apocalypticism. It supplements eschatology, 'linear' apocalypticism, by dealing with the mysteries of the heavenly world and the ways in which man can gain knowledge of those mysteries. A recondite part of Jewish mysticism concerns God's Glory, the 'likeness as the appearance of man' upon the throne-chariot, the *Merkabah*, first seen by the prophet Ezekiel. The mystics performed journeys to heaven and gazed on the Glory. Futhermore, the one who ascended to heaven was transformed and assimilated to the Glory; he could even be mystically identified with the man-like figure on the throne.⁸⁸

Fenton and Roland Goetschel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 15–23. For further discussion of both Jewish and Christian mysticism see also S. D. Fraade, "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism," vol. 13, *World Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Green (New York: Crossroads, 1985), 253–288; Dan Cohn-Sherbok, and Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish and Christian Mysticism An Introduction* (New York: Continuum, 1994); Fossum, "Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism," 260–287 and Gershom G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965).

⁸⁸ Jarl E. Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Freiburg: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995), 1–2. See also Alan F. Segal, "Paul and the Beginning of Jewish Mysticism," in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, eds. John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 95–122.

The scholarly debate about both apocalypse and *Merkabah* texts is relatively recent; the connection between *Merkabah* mysticism and apocalyptic literature is now more accepted since the 1960s, when G. Scholem opened the door with his work linking *Hekhalot* literature with apocalyptic thought. (Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism,* 10–20.) I. Gruenwald continued along this line of inquiry connecting the rabbis who pursued the *Merkabah* with 1 Enoch and various other apocalypses with heavenly journeys and vision of God. Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism,* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980); *idem,* "Jewish *Merkavah Mysticism* and Gnosticism," *Studies in Jewish Mysticism,* eds. Joseph Dan and Frank Talmage (Cambridge, MA: Association for Jewish Studies, 1982), 41–55; and *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism,* esp. 121–130. See also A. Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam': 'Divine Light' Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Ascetical Literature of Fourth-Century Syro-Mesopotamia," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity,* Ed. J. Davila (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 275–308; *idem,* "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men,"125–153; see also

Aphrahat's writings of mystical ascents have many of these similar elements: mystics journeying to heaven, seeing the throne, and even being somewhat identified with the Glory.

A succinct definition of *Merkabah* mysticism is: "esoteric, visionary-mystical tradition centred upon the vision of God, seated on the celestial throne or *Merkabah*." Those who participate in this type of mysticism are the "Descenders to the Chariot" who focus upon the mystical contemplation of Ezekiel's first chapter. The tradition is associated with R. Yohanan ben Zakkai and his students in the second half of the first century C.E. *Merkabah* mysticism proposes an ascent through the *Hekhalot*, or [heavenly]

Joseph Dan "The Religious Experience of the Merkavah," in Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible through the Middle Ages Vol. 13 of World Spirituality, ed. Arthur Green, (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 289–307.) D. J. Halperin's work on the Merkabah interprets it as an outgrowth of the shaviot tradition. David J. Halperin, The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), 317–318. C. R. A. Morray-Jones brought in the Christian component with his various articles and suggests that the Merkabah traditions stemmed from esoteric traditions within the first and second century rabbinism to which some early Christian texts are also a witness. C. R. A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah tradition," JJS 43, Spring (1992): 1-31; idem, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12) The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate," HTR 86, April (1993): 177-217; idem, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12) Part 2," HTR 86, July (1993): 265–292; and idem, The Temple Within: The Embodied Divine Image (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998).) A. D. DeConick expands upon Morray-Jones' thesis in her work about the Gospel of Thomas. (A. D. DeConick, Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas, vol. XXXIII, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996). M. Himmelfarb explains the various aspects of the ascent journeys. Martha Himmelfarb, "From Prophecy to Apocalypse: The Book of the Watchers and Tours of Heaven," Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible through the Middle Ages Vol. 13 World Spirituality, ed. Arthur Green, (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1985), 145-165; and eadem, Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses. esp. 33-36 and 105-114.

⁸⁹ Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism," 2. J. Dan suggests that the *Merkabah* was the topic of very early Jewish speculation, long before the Tannaitic period of the first and second century C.E. How much earlier, we do not know. Dan, "The Religious Experience of the *Merkavah*," 290.

⁹⁰ Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, vii. See also Gruenwald, "Jewish *Merkavah* Mysticism and Gnosticism," 51–52. Another scholar, David Halperin argues that the *Hekhalot* materials date from no earlier than 800 C.E. This dating is disputed. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 359–455.

"palaces." ⁹¹ It describes an adept's ascent, conquest and final visions of the heavenly palaces. In the end, the victorious mystic is able to stand before the Throne and see the Glory or *kavod* of the Lord.

Upon first blush, one may assume that Jewish mystical texts have little or nothing to say to fourth century Syriac Christian authors; however, A. Golitzin and other scholars have been exploring the Syrian Christian connections with both the *Merkabah* and apocalypse literature. ⁹² A. DeConick explains the juxtaposition of these Jewish mystical texts with Christianity:

[...] it seems that during the first century, mystical notions about ascent and gazing on God or his Glory had filtered into Christianity via developing Jewish apocalyptic and mystical circles. It is probable that it was filtering into Rabbinism simultaneously. Thus, it can be plausibly argued that merkavah mysticism is steeped with early Jewish mystical and apocalyptic notions. For this reason, the rabbinic and hekhalot texts are valuable to the study of Christianity's interface with early Jewish mysticism.⁹³

R. Murray even highlights that: "They [the angelic law court] certainly feature; however, in Aphrahat's account, in *Demonstration* XIV, of the vision to which a wise man is rapt, almost as though by the *Merkabah*..." Murray notes the possibilities that Aphrahat may have more in common with these Jewish sages than one may at first think, given that Aphrahat is a fourth century Persian Christian writing for Christians. Our study of Aphrahat corresponds with DeConick's and Golitzin's lines of inquiry. Aphrahat's writings describing human ascent to the heavenly temple have many similar themes to *Merkabah* mysticism. Aphrahat's writings display ideas which may be categorized as apocalypse as well as having common characteristics with *Merkabah* mysticism.

⁹¹ Gruenwald notes that "There are a number of significant ties that link the *Merkavah* material in rabbinic literature and the Hekhalot writings together, this notwithstanding that substantial differences exist between them in relation to their respective form and contents." Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism*, v.

⁹² See for example, Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men," 125–153, and *idem.*, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam," 275–308.

⁹³ DeConick, Seek to See Him, 31.

⁹⁴ Murray, "Some themes and problems of early Syriac angelology," 150.

STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

We have the foundation of who Aphrahat is and what temple means in the simplest sense. We then turn to the process by which a person may become a divine temple; ascend to the heavenly temple; and mystically behold God. For the process of transformation of the person into a divine temple starts with faith in Christ, therefore initially we shall study Aphrahat's christology. Through Aphrahat's discussions of both baptism and the eucharist, we examine the sacramental realization of this faith within the context of the church. The next step in this process is the ascetic vow or dedication to God. Here we consider the various ascetic groupings and their functions within Aphrahat's community. The crux of this transformation is that an ascetic may then actually "become a temple," which includes a study of how Aphrahat describes the ascetic person as a divine temple. One of the results of being a divine temple is "Seeing God," which involves heavenly ascent to the supernal temple, angelic ministry, and some ideas in common with Jewish Merkabah mysticism. It is through faith in Christ, manifest in sacramental realities, ascetic discipline, and transformation by the divine which allows a human being to become a temple of God and see God.

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1 APHRAHAT AND TEMPLE

Aphrahat's views about the human and the divine arise from his larger experience of scripture, his community, and the sacraments. His use of the term temple is remarkably consistent throughout the whole corpus of demonstrations. This is intriguing since they were written over an eight year period and to various audiences, i.e., the inquirer who requested basic education in the faith (Dem. 1–10), the bishops of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Dem. 14), and his community at large (Dem. 11–13, 15–23). The temple image is rooted in the reality of the Jerusalem temple while at the same time both expanded to the heavenly realm and contracted to the realm of the person. Aphrahat describes the restoration of fallen humanity and its elevation to its ultimate destiny of becoming dwelling places for the divine. When Adam is first created, he knows his Creator and is the dwelling place of the Spirit. He then disobeys and rejects the Law of God and becomes divided into two, rather than being one with God. The resolution of the Fall and union with Christ comes when a person recognizes his Creator through faith, is baptized, participates in the eucharist, and dedicates himself to Christ. He then becomes the temple of God. Through the transformation of becoming a divine temple, the person may experience what Aphrahat himself experienced, an ascent to heaven through the mind and heart. The greatest temple of heaven is accessed via the smallest temple of the human heart. This chapter examines the fundamental elements of Aphrahat's temple imagery through the foci of scripture, Adam's fall, Jesus Christ, the church and the sacraments.

SCRIPTURAL QUOTATIONS

The primary use of the term "temple" in the *Demonstrations* is of the individual person as the temple of God. The goal of the Christian in this life is to become the temple of Christ, according to Aphrahat. So central is this theme that the Sage presents it immediately in *Dem.* 1:3 and ends with it in *Dem.* 23:59. The temple motif continually intertwines through most of the intervening demonstrations. The image of the temple is a fully fleshed out

motif which encapsulates Aphrahat's theological anthropology. The following excerpt from the first Demonstration, written to teach the basics of the Christian faith, summarizes the process by which an individual becomes a temple in Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*:

Dem. 1:3: But now hear about faith that is based on the rock, 95 and about the building that is raised up on the rock. For first a person believes, and when one believes, one loves. When one loves, one hopes. When one hopes, one is justified. When one is justified, one is perfected. When one is perfected, one is completed. And when one's whole building is raised up, completed, and perfected, then it becomes a house and a temple of or a dwelling place of Christ, as Jeremiah the Prophet said: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are you, if you amend your ways and your works." (Jer 7:4–5) And again he said by the Prophet: "I will dwell in them and walk in them." (Lev 26:12) And also the Blessed Apostle said: "You are the temple of God and the Spirit of Christ dwells in you." (1 Cor 3:16) And also our Lord again said to his disciples: "You are in Me and I am in you." (John 14:20) on the said when the said is the said to his disciples: "You are in Me and I am in you."

⁹⁵ Aphrahat means that faith in Jesus Christ is the rock foundation for the human life. See Robert Murray's study of this image in "The Rock and the House on the Rock. A chapter in the Ecclesiastical Symbolism of Aphrahat and Ephrem," *OCP* 30 (1964): 315–362.

סממסא שמאממלא לבלמנג באפי סבלים כניים מלבסמי סמסמ ביים מבביל המנשא.

For further discussion of the Odes of Solomon, see page 121.

On the other hand, the typical rabbinic interpretation of the term dwelling place is as a synagogue or house of learning. Cf. BT *Megillah* 29a and *Genesis Midrash Rabbah* (Vayetze) 68.9, referenced originally in Rolle, "Aphrahat and the rabbis," 77. See Harry Freedman, "Genesis," *Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 1, eds. Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1983).

ומשא ון שבר בל מתבנטולא ואולולמיובול בל באפאי בין בנונא ומתב בנונא ומתב בל באפאי ומתב בנונא

⁹⁶ Syr. محلَّك n hayklā.

⁹⁷ Syr. מבעבוֹ mtmrā. The Odes of Solomon has a similar use of dwelling-place in reference to creation and the divine dwelling within it: Ode 22:12 "And the foundation of everything is Your rock. And You have built Your kingdom upon it, And it [you] became the dwelling-place of the holy ones." Charlesworth, The Odes of Solomon the Syriac texts (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 90.

⁹⁸ D 1:3 (PS I/8.19–9.11)

This passage contains many crucial elements for Aphrahat's views of the person as a temple: (a) the key scriptural indwelling passages of Jer 7:4–5, Lev 26:12, 1 Cor 3:16, and John 14:20; (b) the perfected person called a temple; and (c) the process by which this perfection occurs. Aphrahat, as an exegete, bases his arguments in scripture as often as possible. Therefore, his choices of scriptural quotations are key to understanding his temple imagery.

There are five scripture references which Aphrahat uses most commonly concerning the dwelling of God within a person. In the short section above he uses four of these.⁹⁹ They are: Jer 7:4–5, Lev 26:12, 1 Cor 3:16, and John 14:20. The fifth reference is 2 Cor 6:16 which the Sage quotes in other important passages.¹⁰⁰

A particularly significant scripture passage for Aphrahat is Jeremiah 7:4–5 in which the human being is called a temple. It is: "Do not trust in

ورب المست معت ورب المت مدا المالات مدم المالات مدم المالات مدم المالات وحد المالات وحد المالات وحد المالات وحد المالات وحد المالات وحدا المالات وحد

⁹⁹ The distribution of the five proof texts in the *Demonstrations* are as follows:

Lev 26:12: D 1:3 (PS I/9:5–6), D 4:11 (PS I/161:21–22), D 6:14 (PS I/292:16–19), D 13:13 (PS I/572:2–4), D 17:6 (PS I/793:26–27), D 17:7 (PS I/800:10–11), D 18:5 (PS I/829:15–16), D 23:47 (PS II/94:2–3) and D 23:59 (PS II/121:16–17).

Jer 7:4–5: D 1:3 (PS I/9:2–5), D 17:6 (PS I/796:1–2). The D 23:59 (PS II/121:14) passage has overtones of Jer 7:4–5 with "And you call us your temples."

λ in ν ποιο The Dem. 23:59 passage is the only time that Aphrahat uses the Syriac version of the Greek term for temple ν (namsā ναός). This Greek loan word is only used once in the Peshitta NT as well, in Acts 19:24 according to Kiraz, ed. Concordance to the Syriac New Testament, s.v. "νωοι."

1 Cor 3:16: D 1:3 (PS I/9:7–9), D 1:5 (PS I/13:20–21), D 4:10 (PS I/157:24), D 6:1 (PS I/252:9–12), D 12:8 (PS I/524), D 17:6 (PS I/800:9–10) and D 23:47 (PS II/92:25–93:2).

John 14:20: D 1:3 (PS I/9:9–11), D 4:10 (PS I/161:18–19), D 6:11 (PS I/281:21), D 23:47 (PS II/92:22–23) and D 23:50 (PS II/97:16–18).

¹⁰⁰ 2 Cor 6:16: D 1:3 (PS I/9:5–6), D 4:11(PS I/161:21–22), D 6:14 (PS I/292:16–19), D 13:13 (PS I/ 572:2–4), D 17:6 (PS I/793:26–27), D 17:7 (PS I/800:10–11), D 18:5 (PS I/829:15–16), D 23:47 (PS II/ 94:2–3) and D 23:59 (PS II/121:16–17).

deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." (Jer 7:4).101 Verse 4 is in two halves, opening with: "Do not trust in these deceptive words." Aphrahat completely ignores the first half of this verse whenever he is quoting this Jeremiah proof text. He only chooses to quote what is relevant to his argument which, in this case, is the temple of the Lord passage of Jer 7:4. The Masoretic consonantal text of Jer 7:4 is: היבל יהוה היבל יהוה היבל יהוה היבל יהוה המה. "these." The important word for our purposes is the last, המה, "these." The Syriac Peshitta manuscripts of Jeremiah in the Stuttgartensia have 'atun, in Hebrew מתם, "you" emended to the end of the last repetition instead of המה, "these" of the MT. The Peshitta version has "the temple of the Lord are you" (הבוֹאה haykleh 'atun dmāryā). Aphrahat builds on the Syriac emended text of Jeremiah 7:4. Even though Jer 7:4 is rarely considered as a text with overtones of the temple as an anthropological symbol, in Aphrahat's hands it most assuredly is.

The next scriptural proof text is Lev 26:12: "And I will walk among you and will be your God and you shall be my people."103 This passage describes the dwelling of the deity among his people. The dwelling of God in certain people makes those select people his territory or domain. This is a concern about which Aphrahat writes a whole demonstration—that Christians are the true people of God, taking over from the Jewish people who are deemed to be disloyal to God.¹⁰⁴ The Leviticus passage together with Jeremiah 7:4 substantiates Aphrahat's assertion that a devout Christian may become a temple and God will be dwelling within, thereby making the person God's own. Quotations from the Apostle Paul, Aphrahat's favorite scripture author, further supports his argument.

¹⁰¹ All passages from scripture will be quoted according to the Revised Standard Version except internal biblical citations from other sources.

¹⁰² Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, eds. Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstriftung, 1967/77), 795.

¹⁰³ R. J. Owens notes that when Aphrahat is citing 2 Cor 6:16 he is only dealing with the first half of the verse, which follows the Peshitta exactly, and that "there can be little doubt that he is excerpting from his Bible." Owens, "Aphrahat as a witness," 43.

¹⁰⁴ D 16 entitled "On the Peoples which are in the Place of the People." Ephrem shares this polemical concern of Aphrahat's; see Robin A. Darling, "The "Church from the Nations" in the Exegesis of Ephrem," in IV Symposium Syriacum 1984, eds. Hans J. W. Drijvers and René Lavenant (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), 111-121.

The Sage is a great student of "the Blessed Apostle" Paul (Paul E אבא shlihā tubānā) as the over 225 citations within the Demonstrations witness. 105 Paul is Aphrahat's most prominent theological teacher, far outweighing the other writers of the New Testament and even of the Hebrew scriptures. Aphrahat uses the apostle Paul to guide him in terms of the "two spirits" concept of the human (1 Cor 15:35-58) for the tradition of "grieving the Spirit" (Eph 4:30-32). The most important Pauline passages about the temple are: 1 Cor 3:16-17, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are"106 and 2 Cor 6:16, "What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Lev 26:12 is quoted within this citation. The Pauline quotation combines the sentiments from both the Leviticus and Jeremiah quotations in the Dem. 1:3 passage. The Sage then crowns his argument with a quotation from the fourth gospel: John 14:20, "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." He uses this Johanine quotation many times throughout the Demonstrations. According to this passage, the most important idea is that Christ God dwells in us. So the scriptures corroborate Aphrahat's view on God indwelling a person and this then creates a minidivine temple. His use of scripture is straightforward in the Dem 1:3 passage, though this is not always the case as other scholars have noted.

R. Owens found that Aphrahat frequently cites scripture from memory, often inexactly, with a pronounced tendency toward accidental mixture of elements from different passages. The conflation of various passages makes the job of the textual critical scholar more difficult. Aphrahat also

¹⁰⁵ Aphrahat's great affinity to Pauline teaching is examined by John H. Corbett, "The Pauline Tradition in Aphrahat," in *Symposium Syriacum IV*, eds. Hans J. W. Drijvers, et. al (Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1987), 13–32; and Stephen Taylor, "Paul and the Persian Sage: some observations on Aphrahat's use of the Pauline corpus," chap. in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 312–331.

¹⁰⁶ In the *Demonstrations*, 1 Corinthians is cited most often out of the Pauline corpus with 66 citations or allusions. 1 Cor 3 is a key scriptural chapter in Aphrahat's work, especially 1 Cor 3:11–13 and 1 Cor 3:16. He uses 1 Cor 3 over fourteen times. For further analysis of Aphrahat's use of Paul in his texts, see Corbett, "The Pauline Tradition in Aphrahat," 29.

¹⁰⁷ Owens, "Aphrahat as a witness," 11 and 42-43.

freely interweaves Hebrew scriptural passages with Pauline and Gospel texts. For example, in *Dem.* 17:6, the Sage writes on the creation account combining Jeremiah, Genesis, Leviticus, and Psalms together with an overtone of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians.

He has honored, raised, and praised the sons of man more than all his creatures because he created them by his holy hands, and he breathed his spirit into them, and from before [all time] he made them to be a dwelling place. And he dwells with them and he walks with them (Lev 26:12; 2 Cor 6:16). For he said by the prophet: "I will dwell with them, and I will walk with them." And also, Jeremiah the prophet said: "The temple of the Lord are you, if you will amend your ways and your works." (Jer 7:4–5) 108

Demonstration 17 is presented as a Christological defense against Jewish questions. So it is interesting that Aphrahat seems to be using a Jewish style of argumentation to teach his audience how to refute Jewish opponents, as he calls them. ¹⁰⁹ In the above quotation, the interweaving of themes supports the assertion that human beings were created by God, filled with his Spirit, and thus are the *locus* of the Creator himself.

As one would expect of a Patristic author, Aphrahat is steeped in the Scriptures. He uses the Hebrew scripture and the New Testament with equal ease. In *Dem.* 1:3, an exemplary temple passage, he weaves four key scriptural quotations together to create his argument. He does not quote a complete verse, nor does he necessarily quote a Scripture as we have evidence of it existing in his time. His use of Scripture is more fluid and dynamic, he assumes that his audience knows the Scriptures and can fill in the blanks if he only cites part of a verse or text. Aphrahat uses the scriptures as a stonemason would use bricks, layering and cementing various passages with the mortar of his faith.

¹⁰⁸ D 17:6 (PS I/793.21–796.2) Aphrahat then quotes Psalm 90:1–2.

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¹⁰⁹ For research on his possible opponents, see 14.

¹¹⁰ For further examples of Aphrahat's partial quotation method, see page 152.

ADAM AND PARADISE

After highlighting some of the scriptural supports for a devout person to be a temple of God in Aphrahat's argument, we now turn to the first created human, Adam, and the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. Aphrahat's theology of Adam may be summarized as follows: salvation is dependent upon changing one's sinful nature from that of Adam to that of the heavenly Adam, Christ, and thereby becoming a divine temple. This transmogrification of a sinful person into a divine temple begins with faith and that is the topic of Aphrahat's first Demonstration in which he gives an outline of his faith:

Now this is the faith, when a person believes in God, the Lord of all, who made heaven and earth, and the seas and all that is in them. He made Adam in his image, gave the Torah to Moses, sent from his Spirit to the prophets, and sent his Messiah to the world.¹¹¹

The Sage then addresses the creation accounts in Genesis 1:26 and 2:7 with a delineation between when the Creator thought of creating humanity and when the creation actually occurred.

Humans are the elder and came before the creatures in [God's] conception, but in birth, the creatures are the elder and before Adam. Adam was conceived and dwelt in God's thought, and when in conception he was contained in his intellect, he created all sorts of creatures with the word of his mouth. When he had perfected and adorned the world so that it was not lacking, he then birthed Adam from his thought and formed the human being with his hands.¹¹²

שני של אין שיתוטואיי בי אוג ושיבל בארשא ביו איזע בילובשי שני לאומל בילובשי שני אפין איזע בילובשי שני איזע מיים אייים איזע מיים איזע מיים איזע מיים איזע מיים אייים איזע מיים איזע מיים איזע מיים איזע מיים איזע מיים אייים איי

D 1:19 is often defined as Aphrahat's "creedal" statement. A more appropriate description is his summary of faith. There are creedal overtones, but to define it specifically as such without Syrian liturgical evidence is an assumption I am not willing to support. Paragraph 19 is very important for the breadth of issues and conciseness of Aphrahat's statements about them. See Richard H. Connolly, "The Early Syriac Creed," ZNTW 7 (1906): 202–223; H. Leonard Pass, "The Creed of Aphrahates," JTS 9 (1908): 267–284; and Pierre, Aphrahae le sage persan, vol. 1, 144–180.

¹¹¹ D 1:19 (PS I/44.13–18)

Aphrahat explains the two creation accounts with the rather metaphysical interpretation that Adam was conceived in God's thought before the creatures and thus is the first creation. This answer fits within Aphrahat's greater anthropological argument, which centers upon the idea of dwelling.¹¹³ Adam starts his existence by "dwelling in God's thought;"¹¹⁴ he then dwells in Paradise until he breaks God's law and is forced to dwell on the earth. The only way to return to Paradise is through the New Adam, Jesus Christ, who may dwell within the faithful, who then have God dwelling in their own thoughts, just as Adam was in God's thoughts before Adam was

¹¹² D 17:7 (PS I/797.1–10)

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Aphrahat notes in D 13:11 that God created only Adam with his hands; every other creature was created by the word of his mouth. See D 13:11 (PS I/564–568).

113 Pierre observes that Aphrahat's anthropology is intermingled with various other aspects of his theology, including christology and soteriology. She then attempts to describe how Aphrahat uses discrete terms, for example, spirit ((napshā. Pierre then writes eight pages on the one aspect of anthropology which has received the most attention over the years, Aphrahat's theory of the "sleep of the soul." She does not deal with the human person as the divine temple which, to my mind, is key to understanding his views of the interaction between the human and the divine. Pierre, Aphraate le sage persan, vol. 1, 181–199.

The issue of the "sleep of the soul" has been thoroughly examined and not readdressed in the last twenty years. Aphrahat suggests that when a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit dies, then the Spirit returns to Christ and at the last judgement the Spirit will return and resurrect the sleeping soul and the body of the just person. If a person is not just, then the Spirit will act as a prosecutor and the person will die a second death, D 6:18. See Daniel Plooij, "Der Descensus ad inferos in Aphrahat und den Oden Salomos," ZNTW 14 (1913): 222–230; Frank Gavin, "The Sleep of the Soul in the Early Syriac Church," Journal of the American Oriental Society 40 (1920): 103–120; Hausherr, "Aphraate," DSp 1:746–754; Riccardo Terzoli, "Âme et Esprit chez Aphraate," ParOr 3, 1 (1972): 105–118; August Vogl, "Die Scheolvorstellungen Afrahats," Ostkirchliche Studien 27 (1978): 46–48 and Marie-Joseph Pierre, "L'âme ensommeillée et les avatars du corps selon le Sage Persan: Essai sur l'anthropologie d'Aphraate Part 1," POC 32 (1982): 233–262; and Part 2, POC 33, 3–4 (1983): 104–142.

114 D 17:7 (PS I/797.3-4) מבתו במעיבולת האבת במבו במעיבולת לארבל אומ האבת במבו במעיבולת האבת האבת אומים לא במבו

created.¹¹⁵ Those who have God dwelling within them and have God in their thoughts are simply declared "a temple of God." Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* show a glorious circle of initial creation, sinfulness, and restoration.

In a later Demonstration, *Dem.* 17 rather than *Dem.* 1, Aphrahat writes that the person was created to become the temple of God, and if God is rejected, then the person is merely an animal:

After God brought forth Adam from within his thought, he formed him from his Spirit, and gave him knowledge of discernment, so that he might discern good from evil and know that God had made him. And because he knew his Maker, God was depicted and conceived¹¹⁶ inside the thought of man. So he [man] became a temple for God his Maker, as it is written: "You are the temple of God" (1 Cor 3:16) and he said: "I shall dwell in them, and I shall walk in them." (Lev 26:11–12) However, if the sons of Adam do not know their Maker, he is not depicted inside, he does not dwell in them, and he is not conceived in their thought. But he regards them like the rest of the creatures.¹¹⁷

Adam was created initially to be the ultimate temple for God, but due to his rebellion and law breaking, death came into the world for all of humanity.

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¹¹⁵ To add yet another layer of "dwelling" to this equation, Aphrahat describes Christ as having God dwell within Him. "When a man sweeps [clean] his soul in the name of Christ, Christ dwells in him, and God dwells in Christ: hence that man becomes one of the three—himself, and Christ who dwells in him, and God who dwells in Christ." D 4:11 (PS I/161.13–17)

¹¹⁶ The verbs "depicted and conceived" as a set are only used four times in the *Demonstrations*, D 17:7 (PS I/796.22, 24, 800.7) and D 2:4 (PS I/53.19–23). Aphrahat writes of (bten) and io_s (swr) in reference to the creation of Adam (D 17:7), Abraham's child (D 2:4), and salvation for humans (D 17:7).

¹¹⁷ D 17:7 (PS I/800.2–16)

But because of the New Adam, humanity may have the Divine indwelling again and may again be restored and become his temple.

The specifics of Adam's sin are less significant to the Sage than the result of Adam's sin. Aphrahat suggests various reasons for Adam's behavior including: pride,¹¹⁸ greed,¹¹⁹ and Satan working through Eve.¹²⁰ He explains that:

His Lord gave him the commandment to keep. If he had kept what was commanded him, then his Lord would have brought him to a higher nature. Since Adam wished to receive greatness, 121 which was not a part of

בוֹ בא באבר אבת באוני בי בוּגשאי: D 14:22 (PS I/625.20–22) "Sin came into the world by the bait of greed, when Adam sinned by the food of the tree and was cast out from paradise."

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In the next paragraph, Aphrahat writes: "All of this earth and all of this paradise were insufficient for Adam's greed which came upon him, until he longed to take and eat even from that he was commanded [not to]." D 14:23 (PS I/628.21–24)

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¹²⁰ D 6:3 (PS I/256.25–26) "For it was through Eve that [Satan] was against Adam, and in his foolishness Adam was enticed by him."

בל ביו בלספי, בל אומ כינו מטאי: מאוגל איבאהל מינו מארט ביבואמה. D 18:8 (PS I/837.7–9) "He created Adam and Eve, but Adam is better than Eve in honor and virtue."

מאגע בבלמלמלה ועוע המא משפיו מכולו גאמלג לעמא לבא מבבו פממנא

See also D 22:13 for a mention of Eve as the mother of all humanity. ¹²¹ Syr. ¬ amutā may also mean pride.

his nature, his Lord returned him to his previous nature of humiliation. 122

Had Adam been a "law abiding citizen" of Paradise, then creation would be free of death and wickedness. Aphrahat writes: "But the breaking of the Law" happened with Adam. From the first day and forever, he breaks the Law." Aphrahat repeats throughout his *Demonstrations* that Adam was the first law breaker and how this results in God having to change the covenant with humanity. This focus upon Adam as the disobedient one fits within the Sage's greater pedagogical objective, which is to show that Jesus Christ is the final and ultimate covenant between God and his people. Therefore the Jews are no longer Israel, since the Christians have taken their place. The first and most important result of Adam breaking God's law is death. Aphrahat explains: "For when Adam broke the commandment and death was decreed for his children, likewise death thought that [he could] imprison all people and become their king forever." Another result of Adam's rebellion is that his children became wicked and corrupt, so the flood and Noah's rescue had to occur. 128

The Fall of Adam provides some wonderful negative imagery in Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*. Adam is an illustration of the unrepentant, and the serpent stands for those within the community who are causing difficul-

אלא בבי נכנסשא לחל אום אבולבע כך נחכא סוכנא סאפ בוכא בוכא בוכא לבו מנושא.

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In D 8:17 (PS I/394), Aphrahat also explains that there are those who even though they are living are still dead to God; Adam is one example of this situation. Because Adam ate from the tree and broke God's law, God considered him to be dead. See also D 2:2 (PS I/49).

¹²² D 9:14 (PS I/440.17-22)

¹²³ Syr. κωανω nāmusā from the Greek root νομος.

¹²⁴ D 14:37 (PS I/672.21–23)

¹²⁵ Cf. D 11:3 (PS I/473), D 11:11 (PS I/497–501) and D 13:4 (PS I/548–549).

¹²⁶ See Demonstration 18 entitled "Against the Jews, who say that they will be gathered together."

¹²⁷ D 22:2 (PS I/993.11-15)

¹²⁸ D 18:2 (PS I/820).

ties for the Sage. Aphrahat cites three times the example of the cowardly Adam who is unrepentant for his sin and blames Eve for all the problems. Ever the pastor, Aphrahat warns his audience about the importance of confessing their sins: "Do not be fools, like Adam, who was ashamed to confess his foolishness." Another malcontent from the Genesis account is the serpent, who was jealous of Adam and therefore tempted him to the fall. Aphrahat uses the serpent to expose some unsavory elements within his own community in the following passage: "In the likeness¹³¹ of the serpent who deceived Adam, people have arisen among us who are deceiving, troubling, evil, presumptuous, cunning, and unrighteous." Aphrahat wishes that his audience would follow the second Adam, Jesus Christ, in humility, in repentance, and in rejecting the example of the first Adam.

Despite this great sin, or fall, Adam still had the seed of righteousness which could be carried on to the subsequent generations. "From the beginning, this grape cluster was guarded by Adam, the first firstborn. Even though he sinned, he guarded the seed of the righteous." ¹³³ It was Jesus Christ, the descendant from Adam through David who was able to correct and remove Adam's curse from humanity—Jesus is *the* seed of righteousness.

The Pauline influence on Aphrahat is quite evident, with the "two Adams" theology most prominently displayed in *Dem.* Six, "On the Covenanters." The first letter to the Corinthians provides the framework around which Aphrahat forms his New Adam theology. As he explains:

For the earthly Adam is he who sinned and the heavenly Adam is our Life-giver, our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, those who receive the

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¹²⁹ D 7:16 (PS I/336.23–337.1)

¹³⁰ D 9:8 (PS I/425).

¹³¹ Syr. ~ ass. dmut.

¹³² D 14:12 (PS I/600.7–9)

¹³³ D 23:14 (PS II/40.14–16)

 $^{^{134}}$ See also D 7:9 (PS I/324–328), D 13:7 (PS I/ 553–557) and D 22:4 (PS I/996–1000).

Spirit of Christ become the likeness¹³⁵ of the heavenly Adam, who is our Life-giver, our Lord Jesus Christ.¹³⁶

Those who receive God into them are in the likeness of Jesus. They are temples for the divine, they even become little christs or little adams. Humans may follow either the first Adam, become completely animal-like, and die, or they may follow the second Adam, become spiritual, and live.

For in the first birth they are born with an animal [natural] spirit which is created inside man and is not [subject to] death, as he said: 'Adam became a living soul.' (Gen 2:7) But in the second birth, that through baptism, they received the Holy Spirit from a particle of the Godhead, and it is not [subject to] death.¹³⁷

The animal soul is found in all humans by virtue of being born from the flesh; the spiritual soul is the Holy Spirit which comes only by virtue of being baptized. This two soul theory was a common idea in the ancient world and is found, for instance, in the *Timeaus*. ¹³⁸ The ideal for the person is to

138 The Platonic reference in the *Timaeus* to the two forms of the soul comes following the creation of the soul in humanity within the context of the creation of the universe. "And they (His own engendered sons), imitating Him, on receiving the immortal principle of soul, (ἀρχὴν ψυχῆς ἀθάνατον) framed around it a mortal body, and gave it all the body to be its vehicle, and housed therein besides another form of soul, (ἐν αὐτῷ ψυχῆς προφκοδόμουν) even the mortal form, which has within it passions both fearful and unavoidable--..." Plato, "Timaeus," in *Plato with an English Translation; Vol. VII*, Loeb Classical Library, ed. T. E. Page (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 178–180.

Origen also has the two souls or two aspects of the soul. See *De Principiis*, Book III, Ch. 4–6, for an example of the two soul theory. Origène, *Traité des Principes, Vol. III*, SC vol. 268, eds. Henri Crouzel and Marcel Simonetti (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1980), 337–348. For Origen's importance to Aphrahat and other common ideas between the two authors, see page 114.

¹³⁵ Syr. אכם א *dmut.*

¹³⁶ D 6:18 (PS I/308.5–11)

¹³⁷ D 6:14 (PS I/293.5–11)

have the spirit soul be the primary soul and the animal soul secondary, so that at the last judgment the animal may be left here on earth and the spiritual rejoin the Spirit of Christ in heaven. In his last Demonstration, Aphrahat summarizes the soteriological ramifications of the two Adams with specific reference to Christ's resurrection:

Great is the gift of the Good One who is among us, the King's pledge who is like him, who was led from among us. The Lover has made it and guards it [without] limit. This is a son of Adam whose body came from Mary, who was led from among us to the place of life. The weak body became mighty, and received glory which was greater and more dazzling than that which Adam stripped off in his fall.¹³⁹

Through Jesus Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and ascension; the weak flesh of humans becomes more glorious than what the first Adam received in Paradise. Moreover, those who follow Christ, the second Adam, may also become mighty and glorious because of him. R. Murray describes the role of the followers of Jesus, the new Adam: "Those who respond to Jesus as their Saviour, and undertake total discipleship of him in poverty and chastity, regain the lost status of Adam." It is my contention that the return to the pre-lapsarian state of Adam is key to understanding Aphrahat's concerns about the state of humans. The fall of Adam in Genesis 2:6 because of the desire to "make oneself wise" must be restored through the true wisdom of God rather than the false wisdom of Adam. Now all things, includ-

Tatian too, has the two kinds of spirit in his writings. In *Oratio Ad Graecos*, Chapter 12, Tatian writes "We have knowledge of two different kinds of spirits, one of which is called soul, $(\psi \nu \chi \eta)$ but the other is greater than the soul; it is the image and likeness of God. The first men were endowed with both, so that they might be part of the material world, and at the same time above it." Tatian. *Oratio Ad Graecos*, ed. Molly Whittaker (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1982), p. 12.1 in Greek, p. 23 in English.

"Δύο πνευμάτων διαφορὰς ἴσμεν ήμεῖς, ὧν τὸ μὲν καλεῖται ψυχή, τὸ δὲ μεῖζον μὲν τῆς ψυχῆς, θεοῦ δὲ εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμοίωσις. ἑκάτερα δὲ παρὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τοῖς πρώτοις ὐπῆρχεν, ἵνα τὸ μέν τι ὧσιν ὑλικοί, τὸ δὲ ἀνώτεροι τῆς ὕλης."

¹³⁹ D 23:51 (PS II/100.1–9)

ing knowledge, are transformed through Christ's incarnation. "We are from Adam, and here we know a little. This alone we know: there is one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one faith, and one baptism." The knowledge of this world is weak or little, but those who follow Christ need to know the simple reality of the One, the *Ihidayā*.

CHRISTOLOGY

Faith and the indwelling of Christ are the two pillars of Aphrahat's theology. Aphrahat's emphasis upon the divine indwelling in the person, or as I have categorized it, temple theology, was observed as early as 1935. Mother Mary Maude noted: "that fundamental doctrine of all [Aphrahat's] teaching, namely, that the whole end of man is that he may become a habitation for the indwelling of Christ, and that for the accomplishment of this purpose the foundation virtue is faith." As Aphrahat himself writes in the opening paragraphs of his first Demonstration entitled "On Faith": "The foundation of our whole faith is the true rock, our Lord Jesus Christ." Later in the Demonstration, Aphrahat proclaims: "... [God] sent his Christ into the world. So that a person should believe in the resurrection of the dead; and should also believe in the sacrament of baptism." The Sage expands his discussion of Jesus from these simple declarations, but he primarily focuses upon the words and ministry of Jesus Christ coupled with the prefiguring of Christ in the Hebrew scriptures. He disregards any of the contemporary

ען בן אומ סעדא הועד בעסוג מודא בבכסונה מס אלמא סעד בבעסונה מודא וסעדא ומעד מעדט מעדא מעדט מעדא בעסונה מודא בעסונה מידא בעסונה בעסונה

¹⁴¹ D 23:60 (PS II/124.10-13)

¹⁴² Mother Mary Maude, "Rhythmic Patterns in the Homilies of Aphraates," *ATR* 17 (1935), 233.

¹⁴³ D 1:2 (PS I/8.10–12)

 $^{^{144}}$ D 1:19 (PS I/44.18–20). See also, Pierre, Aphraate le sage persan, vol. 1, 144–180.

סיףם מסב שהי לבשיחה לבלבא. ההנומיבל אוג בעימ בינולא. המסב ומינה אב באוזא הביבההלא:

¹⁴⁵ As R. Murray summarizes, in Aphrahat's fight with the Jews, he "hits hard but it is a clean fight." He has a formal style with typological parallelism, and the Old Testament figures are compared to Christ. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 42.

christological issues burning to the West in the Roman Empire.¹⁴⁶ Aphrahat's christology has received a lot of scholarly attention but has suffered from some anachronistic expectations.¹⁴⁷ When one considers all of the

¹⁴⁶ Aphrahat does deal with a peculiar christological issue which I am defining as "quantification" for lack of a better term. Within Aphrahat's community, there may have been some people who suggested that if one claims that Christ dwells inside, then Christ's power is diminished and that there are then many christs instead of one. Aphrahat goes to great lengths to combat this view, but the precise identity of these literary disputants is unclear. The literalness of Aphrahat's disputant suggests an anthropomorphite literal turn of mind, but the multiplicity and diminution of Christ is not noted in the sources as a point of anthropomorphite contention.

See for example: D 6:10 (PS I/281.11–15) "For Christ sits at the right hand of His Father, and Christ dwells among men. (Matt 28:20) He is sufficient above and beneath, by the wisdom of His Father. And He dwells in many, though He is one." Aphrahat then cites Isa 53:12, John 14:20, and John 10:30 to support his argument. Aphrahat answers this false accusation using various analogies from the environment, most especially the sun. That is, the sun is in heaven and pours out its power on earth and is not at all diminished. It is the same with God; He is up in heaven and he pours out his power on earth. Therefore one cannot say that there are many suns because light shines down on different places; there is still only one sun, see D 5:25 (PS I/236.21–237.4) and D 6:11 (PS I/284.1–10).

Tatian also addresses this christological confusion over the perceived reduction in the Son's power via dwelling in many people. Tatian writes: "He (the Word) came into being by partition, not by section, for what is severed is separated from its origin, but what has been partitioned takes on a distinctive function and does not diminish the source from which it has been taken. Just as many fires may be kindled from one torch, but the light of the first torch is not diminished because of the kindling of the many, so also the Word coming forth from the power of the father does not deprive the begetter of the power of rational speech." Tatian. *Oratio Ad Graecos*, 5.2. trans. Molly Whittaker. p. 11.

"γέγονεν δὲ κατὰ μερισμόν οὐ κατὰ άποκοπήν. τὸ γὰρ ἀποτμηθὲν τοῦ πρώτου κεχώρισται, τὸ δὲ μερισθὲν οἰκονομίας τὴν διαίρεσιν προσλαβὸν οὐκ ἐνδεά τὸν ὅθεν εἴληπται πεποίηκεν. ὥσπερ γάρ ἀπό μιᾶς δαδὸς ἀνάπτεται μέν πυρὰ πολλά, τῆς δὲ πρώτης δαδὸς διὰ τὴν ἔξαψιν τῶν πολλὼν δαδῶν οὐκ ἐλαττοῦται τὸ φῶς, οὕτω καί ὁ λόγος προελθὼν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς δυνάμεως οὐκ ἄλογον πεποίηκε τὸν γεγεννηκότα."

It is unlikely that Tatian is the source of this image and confusion; Tatian is attempting to correct the confusion, though without much success since it survives into Aphrahat's era.

¹⁴⁷ Bardenhewer notes that: "His Christological ideas are those of the Nicene Fathers, though his expression of them is wanting in precision." Otto Barden-

hewer, "Aphraates," in Patrology: The Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Church, ed. Thomas J. Shahan (Freiburg: B. Herder, 1908), 386. Hudal emphasizes that Aphrahat's christology is not Greek and not based upon philosophical debate about the Logos. Hudal is one of the first to note that Aphrahat was completely separate and uninfluenced by Greek thought. This becomes a commonly touted description of him which is slowly being dispelled. Alois Hudal, "Zur Christologie bei Aphraates Syrus," Theologie und Glaube 3 (1911): 477-487. For the refutation of Hudal's characterization see R. Murray, "Hellenistic-Jewish Rhetoric," 79-85. Loofs portrays Aphrahat as almost Irenaeus in Syriac clothing. Freidrich Loofs, "Die Trinitarischen und Christologischen Anschauungen des Aphraates," in Theophilus von Antiochen Adversus Marcionem und die anderen Theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus, TU vol. 46, 1, eds. Adolf von Harnack and Carl Schmidt (Leipzig: Akademie Verlag, 1930), 257-299. Urbina concludes that despite Aphrahat not having access to Nicene theology, his christology is nonetheless set firmly within the Christian tradition. Ignatius Ortiz de Urbina, Die Gottheit Christi bei Afrahat (Rome: Pont. Inst. Orientalium Studiorum, 1933), 140. On the other hand, Petersen uses the term "subordinationist" for Aphrahat, assuming that Judaic Christian christology must be subordinationist. So since Aphrahat defends Christ with Judaic Christian style arguments which are: "essentially functional, titular, and reference[s] OT passages." Furthermore, Petersen concludes: "if Aphrahat's Christology is read as a subordinationist Christology, then it becomes consistent with who Aphrahat was..." William L. Petersen, "The Christology of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage: an excursus on the 17th Demonstration," VC 46 (1992): 241–250. Why this makes the Sage's christology, by necessity, subordinationist is unclear in his article. I would suggest that Jewish Christian views of Christ, as Aphrahat expresses them, are most definitely informed by the lewish modes of argument but that does not make him subordinationist: rather, he is traditional.

Later scholars have been more sympathetic to his perspective and have generally refrained from condemning him for non-Nicene christology. Klijn starts the scholarly change of heart through his thorough and thoughtful analysis of Aphrahat's use of the term nature ("This [study] shows that when dealing with Syriac christological and theological treatises we have to be continuously aware of a way of thinking different from the one we are used to of our Greek and Latin literature." A. F. J. Klijn, "The Word kejān in Aphraates," VC 12 (1958): 67. Bruns' study is helpful in that he notes Aphrahat's christology is very complex and couched in a framework which is not "either/or." Aphrahat's christology is functional rather than systematic in the modern sense. As he concludes: "Theologie und Poesie, Dogma und Spiritualität bilden für Aphrahat eine unauflösliche Einheit." Peter Bruns, Das Christusbild Aphrahats des Persischen Weisen (Bonn: Borengässer, 1990), 182.

Demonstrations as a whole, one may see that from the bare bones declaration of faith quoted above comes a multifaceted, multi-functioning defense of Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior of all.

Aphrahat writes one demonstration entitled "On the Messiah, that He is the Son of God," Dem. Seventeen. 148 The thesis of this particular demonstration is that the Jews are wrong to accuse the Christians of worshiping a mere man; Jesus is the means by which we may know the Father and the fulfillment of the messianic scriptures. Aphrahat's christology in this demonstration is constrained by the task at hand, the polemics against the perceived accusations of the Jews. 149 Aphrahat is writing a polemical Demonstration to assist his audience in refuting the Jewish perspective concerning the Messiah. In Dem. 17, he writes: "While we grant to them [the Jews] that he is a man, we also honor him and call him God and Lord."150 This type of argument is commonly referred to as "name christology" or that Jesus' name is the Christ, therefore, he is so.¹⁵¹ Aphrahat uses examples from the Hebrew Scriptures to show that naming a human being "god" is not unique to Jesus and the Jews themselves called Moses a god. Even though name christology may not seem to be a convincing argument to many modern day scholars it is the means by which Aphrahat attempts to refute the perceived attacks.

Over the years, many scholars have been disappointed by the apparent reticence Aphrahat shows in *Dem.* 17 to proclaim Jesus Christ to be more than just a righteous man. Some scholarly assessments of Aphrahat's christology include that it is: singularly archaic, ¹⁵² relatively superficial, ¹⁵³ and

רמלר אפי בו עלל למס בבו אברי שנים יסיד הפונים, ספינים ארט ארים מינים אלל למס בי הרים בי הרים מינים אלל למינים מינים אלל למינים אלל

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¹⁴⁸ D 17 the title in Syriac is מבל ביים מס מוֹשה אלים וויים לביז הלאמוא.

¹⁴⁹ C. S. C. Williams stated that the primary concern of Aphrahat is to "show the Jewish arguments against the Christian faith in Christ can be met on exactly the same ground as that on which the Jews themselves stood, viz., the *Peshitta* version of the Old Testament, itself the work of Jews or Jewish influenced Christians and the version commonly read by both Jews and Christians in Mesopotamia. C. S. C. Williams, "The Persian Sage," *Church Quarterly Review* 146 (1949/1950), 179.

¹⁵⁰ D 17:2 (PS I/785.15–788.1)

¹⁵¹ Aphrahat also uses name Christology in D 5:24 (PS I/233.19–21), D 14:31 (PS I/653.5–9) in reference to Phil 2:9–11, D 23:20 (PS II/65.2–6), and finally D 23:59 (PS II/121.8–13).

¹⁵² Marcel Simon, Verus Israel: a study of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425), trans. Henry McKeating (New York: 1948; Oxford University Press, 1986), 160.

wanting in precision.¹⁵⁴ A common view is voiced by N. Brox who critiques Aphrahat's work with: "The Greek need for definition and ontological designation is clearly not here in Aphrahat."155 On the whole, scholarly disappointment with Aphrahat's christology not being more Greek does not allow them to give credit for what the Sage does write about Jesus the Christ. Given the range of interpretations concerning Aphrahat's christology, one clear warning from A. F. J. Klijn must be heeded to give Aphrahat his due: "[When] dealing with Syriac Christological and theological treatises we have to be continuously aware of a way of thinking different from the one we are used to in our Greek and Latin literature."156 Many scholars over the years focused upon Greek and Latin theology, therefore when they encounter the Syriac Christians the scholars sometimes found the Syrians lacking in precision. Judging Aphrahat's christology according to later responses to events, such as Chalcedon, or according to Greek or Latin definitions is disingenuous. So too is judging the Sage's christology on only one demonstration; his christology is far richer and more complex than he has been given credit for by some scholars.

One path by which to enter into Aphrahat's christological thought is via the standard incarnational passages from the New Testament. One of the more significant verses is Philippians 2:7, which Aphrahat cites completely only twice. The first quotation is within the context of Christ being an example of diligent love for us: "The Son of the Lord of all took on 157

¹⁵³ E. Rolle exclaims that: "Aphrahat settles for relative superficiality and never asserts here the Christian claim that Jesus was more than another human being, that he was God's son in a more literal sense." Rolle, "Aphrahat and the rabbis," 65.

¹⁵⁴ Otto Bardenhewer observes that, "His Christological ideas are those of the Nicene Fathers, though his expression of them is wanting in precision." Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 386.

Some other scholars suggest that Aphrahat is old fashioned because he does not deal with the Greek christological controversies nor speculative Logos theology. Cf. Hudal, "Zur Christologie bei Aphraates Syrus," 479 and Tjitze Baarda, *The Gospel Quotations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1975), 287.

¹⁵⁵ Norbert Brox, *Jüdische Wege des altchristilichen Dogmas*, Pro Memoria (Jerusalem: Das Studien der Dormition Abbey, 1983), 14.

¹⁵⁶ Klijn, "The Word kejān in Aphraates," 67.

¹⁵⁷ Syr. Low shqal. Payne-Smith definition is "a) to lift up, carry, bear; b) to take, partake, receive; c) rarer uses: to bear a crop; to put on, wear; to borrow; to subtract, to omit; to take as the meaning, interpret." Payne-Smith, 593.

the likeness¹⁵⁸ of a servant for our sake; and he, to whom all is subjected, subjected himself in order to free us from the bondage of sin."¹⁵⁹ The second quotation is in *Dem.* 6:9, in which Aphrahat exhorts his audience to follow Christ's model: "and though he is God and Son of God, he took upon¹⁶⁰ him the likeness of a servant." (Phil 2:6,7,8)¹⁶¹ To follow Christ's example the people must grow in holiness, or as Brock so aptly summarizes: "divine *kenōsis* needs to be met by human *kenōsis*."¹⁶² The self emptying of Christ shows how the people are to empty themselves, becoming completely humble, in order to become temples of God.

Aphrahat uses *shqal* and its cognates over 150 times in his works. The verb *shqal* is used in various liturgical instances including: to receive baptism, D 4:19 (PS I/181.13); to bear a yoke and to receive Holy Communion (D 6:1(PS I/252.15). The verb *shqal* is also used in reference to a human becoming like the angels, e.g. Elijah D 6:5 (PS I/264.7) and the Covenanters D 6:1 (PS I/248.25–26). Through Aphrahat's very frequent use of *shqal*, we may conclude that partaking in the likeness of angels, God's wisdom, and the eucharist lead towards the ultimate partaking, that of Christ receiving our human nature which allows for humans to become the resting place of God and therefore divine temples.

¹⁵⁸ Syr. או מבים dmutā.

Aphrahat then cites Matt 5:3 concerning the poor in spirit being blessed. The Syriac term for *kenosis* or self emptying is from the root with sraq. Aphrahat does not quote from Phil 2:7. He does use various cognates of with sraq but not within the context of Phil 2:7. This term is first used in the *Liber Graduum* I.2 according to Brock, Syriac Fathers on Prayer, xxxi-xxxii.

160 Syr. Inz. shqal.

¹⁶¹ D 6:9 (PS I/277.2-3)

ישב אשביז האמשו השלה זסט סש השלה זסט

¹⁶² Brock, *Syriac Fathers on Prayer*, xxxi. See also Sebastian P. Brock, "The priesthood of the baptised: some Syriac perspectives," *Sobornost* 9, 2 (1987): 21.

¹⁶³ The Syriac المنافع عند المنافع The Syriac المنافع may mean feeble, little, weak, or small. Payne-Smith, 118.

kingdom: we worship his littleness in order to share in his majesty."¹⁶⁴ Participation in the Divine is dependent upon the incarnation, upon Jesus Christ becoming like us, little, weak, and feeble. In another passage, Aphrahat furthers the imagery of greatness and littleness, framing it within the context of the temple: "Your majesty burrows into the little heart, ¹⁶⁵ you have made of us temples wherein your glory ¹⁶⁶ dwells."¹⁶⁷ The greatness and vastness of the Divine is secreted in the little heart of the human being, not only at the incarnation but also when a faithful person is able to partake in this transformational process and become a temple for the glory of God. The Macrocosm becomes the microcosm, so that the microcosm may participate in the Macrocosm.

Aphrahat uses two key terms in his christology: nature kyānā (φύσις,)¹⁶⁸ and person αιωσα qnumā (ὑπόστασις).¹⁶⁹ A. F. J. Klijn in his article "The Word kejān in Aphraates," extensively studied Aphrahat's use of the term "nature" and the following analysis is greatly indebted to his work.¹⁷⁰ Nature has two different senses in Aphrahat's treatises: the first is without christological significance and the second is with reference to Christ. The former may be divided into various categories: nature as being

¹⁶⁴ D 14:39 (PS I/684.8–10)

המחם בלבא כי לאמבא וכא גאול לבשב בלבחואא. עם ובחוחאת המחם ביבחאת.

¹⁶⁶ Syr. ≺i⊶≺ 'igārā.

¹⁶⁷ D 23:59 (PS II/121.12–13)

יא וביא אויים אויים אויים יאומבו אויים וויים יאומבו אויים אויים

¹⁶⁹ Payne-Smith, 510. According to Payne-Smith, Nestorians distinguish between hypostasis το ὑπόστασις and person το προσωπον as in the following: Christ is two natures and two *qnumā* united in the person of the Son.

תבים הכים אליב, מוספים בים אולים מוספים אולים מוספים אולים מוספים אלים מוספים פופאר אולים מוספים מוספים מחוד מוספים מחוד מוספים מוספי

¹⁷⁰ Klijn, "The word *kejān*," 57–67.

the property of the substance,¹⁷¹ nature in the plural referring to created beings,¹⁷² or nature as a state of being, e.g., marriage.¹⁷³ As Klijn summarizes: "In all cases the word points to 'the being' of a person or something."¹⁷⁴ The christological sense of nature is that our nature is mutable via the Holy Spirit and Christ, but Christ's nature is immutable. "And what are the gold and silver and good stones by which the building is built up? The good works of faith shall be preserved in the fire because Christ dwells in that true building, and he is its keeper from the fire."¹⁷⁵ Aphrahat sets up his entire portrait of the Christian in this passage from the first Demonstration. The building is the person in whom Christ is dwelling. This process is fundamental to Christ's soteriological function within us. It is through the indwelling of Christ that our natures are changed from the physical and earthly to the heavenly and divine.¹⁷⁶ All the while Christ's nature remains untouched.¹⁷⁷

The second important term for the Sage's christology is *qnumā*, which is defined as "hypostasis, substance, actual existence, a person, individual, and individual self." He uses this term in a christological manner in *Dem.* 6:11:

God and his Christ, though they are One, yet dwell in many men. They are in heaven in person, ¹⁷⁹ and are diminished in nothing when they dwell in many; as the sun in heaven is not at all diminished when its

משארשה מים המשארשה הכלולים בל הבניא מים במים הבישה מים הלולים בל הבניא מים הלולים בל הבניא מים אניים בל הבניא מים בל הבניא בל הבניא מים בל הבניא בל הבניא מים בל הבניא בל הבניא

لم بن محداء ماندم بالده في صعه في ملك سلب مدادكم ملك مال عمل لك مدادل صب حالل .

 $^{^{171}}$ D 5:21 (PS I/225.22–23) deals with wine being sour. In D 23:61 (PS II/125.6) fire consumes according to its nature.

¹⁷² D 23:55 (PS II/111.2), D 23:58 (PS II/117.25), and D 23:58 (PS II/120.4).

¹⁷³ D 18:2 (PS I/821.5), D 18:4 (PS I/825.6), and D 9:14 (PS I/439.14–22).

¹⁷⁴ Klijn, "The word *kejān*," 65. For a comparison of 'nature / Ursprüngliches' see Ortiz de Urbina, *Die Gottheit Christi bei Afrahat*, 100–101.

¹⁷⁵ D 1:12 (PS I/29.10–15)

¹⁷⁶ Cf. D 6:18 (PS I/308.5–24), see page 40.

¹⁷⁷ D 23:57 (PS II/117.3–7) "For your goodness is never conquered by our evil, your mercy is not withheld because of our wickedness. Neither can your nature be corrupted because of us."

¹⁷⁸ Payne-Smith, 510.

¹⁷⁹ Person in this example translates the Syriac مدمحت qnumā.

power is released on the earth. How much more therefore is the power of God, since by the power of God the very sun itself exists. 180

The common use of and an analysis of "himself." 181 Aphrahat is therefore defending the actual existence of Jesus Christ as a divine person.

The incarnation allows Christ to dwell within us. Without his taking our nature upon him, we cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven. As Aphrahat declares: "When our Lord went outside of his nature, he walked in our nature. Let us remain in our nature, that in the day of judgment he may cause us to partake in his nature." The phrase "our nature" in this pas-

מבא אם אלמא מפנינת בו עו אינינת אל כבון אנא משוק בלין במניא במניא במניא במניא במניא בעלין: ממני שלין מעלין בעליא בעלין: ממני בעליא בעלין: איני ולא עמיל בעלא בעליא בעלין: איני ולא עמיל בעלא בעליא בעלין: איני ולא מביל בעליא בעליא בעליא מביל מביל בעליא בעלי מביל מביל מביל בעלים בילים אלים.

מין בי אלא לבי בי בינה הלף בבין. ובים אלה בבין: ובים בים בים אלה שהלב לבינה.

See also D 6:10 (PS I/280.7–11). There are echoes of 2 Peter 1:4 within this passage but it is unlikely that Aphrahat had this letter within his scriptural canon. Similar sentiments are found in Irenaeus Adversus Haereses, Preface, Book V—"the only true and steadfast Teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself." "solum autem firmum et verum magistrum sequens, Verbum Dei, Iseum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui propter immensam suam dilectionem factus est quod sumus nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse." Irenäus von Lyon, Adversus Haereses: Gegen Die Häresien Fünfter Teilband, ed. Norbert Brox (Freiburg: Herder, 1995), 20–22. English translation from Irenaeus Against Heresies, ANF vol. 1, trans. A. C. Coxe (Christian Literature Pub.; 1885, Hendrickson:1995), 526.

Irenaeus expresses a similar idea later in the book: "For we have given nothing to Him previously, nor does He desire anything from us, as if He stood in need of it; but we do stand in need of fellowship with Him. And for this reason it was that He graciously poured Himself out, that He might gather us into the bosom of the Father." "Nihil enim illi ante dedimus neque desiderate aliquid a nobis quasi indigens, nos autem indigemus eius quae est ad eum communionis, et propterea benigne effudit semetipsum ut nos colligeret in sinum Patris." *Adv. Haer.* Book V, Cpt. II, Section 1. Irenäus von Lyon, *Adversus Haereses,* 31–33. Irenaeus, *Against*

¹⁸⁰ D 6:11 (PS I/285.7–14)

¹⁸¹ Cf. D 4:11 (PS I/161.13–17).

¹⁸² D 6:10 (PS I/277.21–23)

sage refers to the nature which is spiritual and divine within the person, not the sinful nature. Aphrahat succinctly describes the incarnation of Christ: "When he came to us, he had nothing of ours, and we had nothing of his, [at that time] his two natures were his own and his Father's." ¹⁸³ If Aphrahat were writing later and in Greek, one might even presume to say that he is expressing the idea of *theosis*. Aphrahat uses the Pauline context of the two Spirits in 1 Cor 15:35–58 as his main anthropological framework. He continues that the sinful earthly human nature cannot be taken to heaven, but through becoming spiritual by faith in the incarnation of Jesus, a person may become by nature heavenly. Klijn explains this process:

This shows that Aphraates is pointing to two ways by which the body may pass over from this reality to the other one. It happens by an absorbing of the body by the Spirit in case of which the body is bound to belong to the other reality. Next it is made possible because Christ shared his heavenly position with his earthly body so that, so to say, all bodies are already virtually belonging to heaven.¹⁸⁴

I suggest that Aphrahat would not consider the "belonging" to heaven as "virtual" but rather, as actual. Those who follow Christ and have become temples of him *are* his; they are not virtually his.

The followers of Christ are called "temples" and Christ defines himself as "temple." The titles of Christ are an important means to understand Aphrahat's christology. The most important name is Jesus Christ. As the Sage writes: "his Father has given him the best name above all the names,

Heresies, ANF, vol. 1, 528. My thanks to A. Golitzin for suggesting the Irenaeus similarities.

Athanasius also states that: "He (Christ), indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God."

«αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν.» Oratio de incarnatione Verbi, §54.1.3 Athanase d'Alexandrie, Sur l'Incarnation du Verbe, SC vol. 199, ed. Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1973), 458. See also Athanasius, De Incarnatione Verbi: Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar, trans. E. P. Meijering (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1989), 356.

S. Brock suggests that Ephrem is indeed using the idea of *theosis* in his work, Hymn on Faith 5:17. Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 154.

¹⁸³ D 6:10 (PS I/280.25–281.2)

that by the name of Jesus, all knees bow, not only those on earth but also those in heaven."¹⁸⁵ Other names or titles for Jesus are: the Christ,¹⁸⁶ our Savior or Lifegiver,¹⁸⁷ the Son of God,¹⁸⁸ the Gift,¹⁸⁹ the door,¹⁹⁰ the King,¹⁹¹ the King's Son,¹⁹² the priest,¹⁹³ the Holy of Holies,¹⁹⁴ Lord of the

¹⁸⁵ D 14:31 (PS I/652.23–26). Cf. Phil 2:10–11.

ישה לה אההש, שלא ומשלו לא של שלשים: וכח בשלא ושחב ולבחם בל כוסף לא כלשהו וכאולא אם וכשלא:

¹⁸⁶ This title for Christ $mshi\underline{h}\bar{a}$ is used over 230 times in the complete corpus.

¹⁸⁷ Syr. حسنه mahyānā can also be translated as Life Giver. It is used as a title for Christ approximately twenty eight times in the *Demonstrations*.

 $^{^{188}}$ The Son of God is used throughout the *Demonstrations*. Cf. D 17:1 (PS I/785). It is used fifteen times specifically referring to Christ.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. D 23:49 (PS II/96–97).

¹⁹⁰ Cf. D 4:5 (PS I/145.13), D 4:9–10 (PS I/156–160) and D 23:3 (PS II/9.1).

 $^{^{191}}$ Cf. D 3:2 (PS I/101), D 4:10 (PS I/157), D 6:1 (PS I/245), D 6:1 (PS I/252), D 10:9 (PS I/460), D 14:35 (PS I/660), D 14:39 (PS I/684) and D 23:59 (PS II/121).

¹⁹² D 6:10 (PS I/280). Other titles are the great King in D 9:4 (PS I/414); the King-Messiah خلك malkā mshihā in D 14:30 (PS I/649); and King is also used for God the Father D 23:59 (PS II /120). Aphrahat's use of "King" for both persons of the Trinity does cause some confusion in translation. Usually it is fairly clear for whom he is using the title.

¹⁹³ Cf. D 2:6 (PS I/57) Christ is the priest who enters into the Holy Place. Syr. for priest is במבה kāhnā. Murray notes that Aphrahat uses kāhnā instead of אבסבה kumrā, which according to him means "pontiff" (Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 178). In Payne-Smith, kumrā is translated as 'priest.' (Payne-Smith, 209) Aphrahat uses kumrā five times referring to the OT priests. D 11:3 (PS I/476.20–21) "Melchizedek was the priest of God the most high."

¹⁹⁴ Dan 9:20–27 quotation in D 19:9 and 10 (PS I/877–881).

House,¹⁹⁵ heavenly Adam,¹⁹⁶ Physician,¹⁹⁷ the Rock,¹⁹⁸ and the temple. Most of these titles derive from scripture and this list is not exhaustive.¹⁹⁹ A key title is Christ as the temple; in a long comparison between Moses and Jesus, Aphrahat notes that:

Moses made for them the temporal tabernacle²⁰⁰ so that they may offer sacrifices and offerings and be forgiven for their sins. Jesus raised up David's tabernacle which had fallen,²⁰¹ and is [now] raised. Again he said to the Jews, "This temple, which you see, when it is destroyed, in three days I shall raise it up,"²⁰² and his disciples understood that he was speaking about his own body, for when they would destroy it, he would raise it up in three days. In that very tabernacle he has promised us life, and in it our sins are forgiven. Theirs is called the temporal tabernacle, because it was used for a little while. But ours is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is forever.²⁰³

Aphrahat equates Jesus Christ with the last, indestructible, heavenly temple. All sacrifices and atonement for sins are fulfilled in Jesus. The Sage also inserts a polemical strike against his Jewish opponents by saying that the Jewish tabernacle of the Exodus is temporary and temporal whereas the Christian temple of Christ Jesus is forever and eternal. Christ as temple is

لمه حدة محمه معطاحته الماحه حمد احتبه ممه احتبه المهده محمد المحمد معدد المعدد من المحمد الم

¹⁹⁵ Cf. D 10:9 (PS I/465).

¹⁹⁶ Cf. D 6:18 (PS I/308), see page 40.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. D 23:52 (PS II/ 100). Aphrahat uses معنه 'asyā as one of Christ's titles approximately twenty six times.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. D 9:4 (PS I/414), see Murray, "The Rock and the House on the Rock," 315–362, for a full analysis of this imagery.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan*, vol. 1, 64 n. 100. She explains that each of the many titles corresponds to one unique image of God that Jesus Christ manifests.

²⁰⁰ Syr. אבערנא mashkanzabnā.

²⁰¹ Acts 15:16.

²⁰² John 2:19.

²⁰³ D 12:8 (PS I/524:18–525.4)

juxtaposed with the image that people are the temple of Christ or the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Aphrahat uses Spirit, Holy Spirit, Spirit of Christ, and Christ almost interchangeably for identification of the Divine who may dwell within a person. Aphrahat has a penchant for "internalizing" a text commonly interpreted to refer to the external physical world as in his discussion of Matt 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."²⁰⁴ The common interpretation is that this passage refers to God's presence among people gathered to praise him. Aphrahat instead focuses upon God dwelling within the individual, and the sage construes this text to mean that Christ and the Father dwell inside a person; there are two or three gathered when the person is physically alone. As he writes: "When a man sweeps [clean] his soul in the name of Christ, Christ dwells in him, and God dwells in Christ: hence that man becomes one of the three–himself, and Christ who dwells in him, and God who dwells in Christ."²⁰⁵ In this case, the agent of dwelling is Christ with God the Father indwelling inside of Christ.²⁰⁶

Aphrahat never states that all three persons of the Trinity indwell in the person. Although, this can be inferred quite easily. As he writes in *Dem.* 6:14: "Therefore, my friend, we also have received from the Spirit of Christ, and Christ dwells in us, as it is written that the Spirit said through the mouth of the Prophet: 'I will dwell in them and will walk in them.' (Lev

²⁰⁴ Aphrahat internalizes the whole idea of temple instead of focusing solely upon the external building aspects.

²⁰⁵ D 4:11 (PS I/161.13–17)

מא הבוצ אוצ נפצח בשמא המשננאה: משננא באל כמו: מאלמא באל במשננאא. מבגל ממא לם ממ בינצא עד מק ומלמא: מנמכם ממשננאא הבאל כמו: מאלמא הבמשננאה:

²⁰⁶ If one wished to be somewhat simplistic, this passage suggests that Aphrahat may have a sort of "matroshki doll" christology. The christological ramifications of this text taken out of context without other texts of Aphrahat may lead to the presumption that Aphrahat is less than main stream with his interpretation. Likely Aphrahat did not even know Nicaea I; therefore, judging Aphrahat according to Chalcedonian terminology is anachronistic. Aphrahat's christology is not modalistic; he is merely writing early on in the life of the church. Cf. Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 386 and Ortiz de Urbina, *Die Gottheit Christi bei Afrahat*, 125.

21:12)"²⁰⁷ Aphrahat uses Leviticus to support his assertion that the second person of the Trinity may dwell within people. The Spirit of Christ is the same as the Holy Spirit or third person of the Trinity in Aphrahat's writings. So in *Dem.* 6:14 we have two of the persons of the Trinity indwelling. The Sage also writes in *Dem.* 4:11 that wherever Christ dwells so the Father does also; here are the first and second persons of the Trinity dwelling within people. Therefore, we may state that Aphrahat does have a Trinitarian concept of indwelling in a human being.²⁰⁸

When he uses either Christ, God or the Holy Spirit to explain who is residing in the person, he means that the same God does the dwelling. As F. Loofs explains: "The inhabiting of the Spirit and the inhabiting of God are for Aphrahat one and the same." The various phrases that he uses are the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and simply, the Spirit. Aphrahat also writes that Christ or God dwells in people without

²⁰⁷ D 6:14 (PS I/292.15–19)

The terms Spirit and Spirit of Christ being used interchangeably may be due to the influence of Pauline texts upon Aphrahat. For example: Romans 8:9, D 23:47 (PS II/91:24–25) and D 8:5 (PS I/370:9–10). S. Brock notes this phenomenon: "As is the case elsewhere in early Syriac literature there is an easy movement between Spirit as Holy Spirit and as Spirit of Christ." Sebastian P. Brock, "Fire from Heaven: From Abel's Sacrifice to the Eucharist. A Theme in Syriac Christianity," in *StPatr.* Vol. 25, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 236.

²⁰⁸ An example of Aphrahat being obviously Trinitarian is D 23:63 (PS II/133.3–8) "Oh you who swear oaths on your head and lie, if you will hold as true the three names mightily and gloriously commemorated on your head: Father, Son and Holy Spirit when you had received your sign of salvation, and if you hold true the baptism, you will not lie."

ر المان با بنند ر المان معن معن محن محلا ملا معن محن محلا ملا معن محن محن محن محن محن محن محن محن المان محن المان الما

²¹⁰ Spirit of God reference used with Rom 8:9 in D 23:47 (PS II/92).

Spirit of Christ references: D 1:3 (PS I/8), D 1:5 (PS I/13), D 5:25 (PS I/236), D 6:1 (PS I/252), D 6:14 (PS I/292), D 6:17 (PS I/301), D 6:18 (PS I/308) and D 23:47 (PS II/92).

Holy Spirit: Cf. D 6:17 (PS I/300), D 6:18 (PS I/308), D 12:8 (PS I/524) and D 23:63 (PS II/133).

reference to the Spirit.²¹¹ According to Aphrahat, one of the Trinity, or even all of the Trinity can and do dwell in humanity, if the individuals are worthy. The Holy Spirit has many roles; the fundamental role is being sent by God as his Spirit upon the prophets.²¹² His Spirit is sent to the prophets and also to the followers of Christ in the sacrament of baptism.

Pneumatology and christology are intimately connected for the sage, but it is to christology we shall return. Aphrahat also describes the incarnation in terms of putting on the human body as though it were a suit of clothes. "He [Christ] has clothed himself with the body made from dust, and he is drawing it to his nature." The origin of this imagery is probably Genesis 3:21 which describes the garments of skin the Lord made for Adam and Eve. Paul expands on the clothing motif in Galatians 3:27 with the Christians being clothed by Christ through baptism. Describing the incarnation using clothing imagery or "putting on" the body is a com-

Spirit: D 1:19 (PS I/44), D 6:14 (PS I/292), D 6:15 (PS I/297), D 6:17 (PS I/301), D 6:18 (PS I/308), D 9:4 (PS I/414), D 14:38 (PS I/680), D 14:43 (PS I/700), D 17:6 (PS I/793), D 18:11 (PS I/840), D 23:52 (PS II/100), and D 23:53 (PS II/104).

Spirit is also used for the non-divine, the Spirit of impurity D 2:20 (PS I/92.21) אושל and the Spirit that pollutes D 9:9 (PS I/428.22) אושל השון.

²¹¹ Cf. D 6:10 (PS I/281–284), D 6:11 (PS I/285), and D 9:10 (PS I/432).

 212 D 1:19 (PS I/44), D 6:12–13 (PS/I 285, 288, 292); D 17:6 (PS/I, 793); D 23:11 and 23:58 (PS/II 32 and 117).

²¹³ D 23:49 (PS II/96.18–19)

حد سلم دویم لحد محنه درج حونه *منحده لحسه.

* Aphrahat uses ** ** ngad ten times, it means: to draw out, stretch out, attract, induce, and persuade; in the Pa'el it means to beat or torture. Payne-Smith, 326–327. The Pa'el form of the verb is used the majority of the time, especially in quotations of the unforgiving servant parable of Matt 18:23–35. The quotation above is the only christological use of the verb in Aphrahat's writings.

²¹⁴ For a discussion of the garments of skin see Gary A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), esp. 117–134.

²¹⁵ Galatians 3:27 "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." "Put on" in the English translates the Greek "ἐνεδύσαδθε," meaning to dress, clothe, put on, or wear and in the *Peshitta* the term is λ lābshā or to clothe.

mon Syriac motif. Aphrahat functions within a normal system of images with these descriptions.²¹⁶

Aphrahat's christology is best described in terms of *praxis* rather than *theoria*. In other words, Jesus' action and function within the human realm are the means by which one may understand Aphrahat's doctrine of the Christ. His is a practical expression of the incarnation and salvation, rather than a theoretical argument. The key function of Christ in the created world is his dwelling within a baptized person. As A. Golitzin writes:

[F]or Aphrahat, as for Macarius and [my] other Syrians, the recovery of the 'Glory of Adam' means, first and foremost, being assimilated to Christ, though not simply by way of ascetic exercise and the acquisition of his virtues, which certainly do feature in their understanding, but as well through consciously perceiving him within themselves such that they, too, 'in Christ,' might become for others as well as for themselves the locus—indeed, as here, the 'throne'—of the same Glory which appeared to Moses and the prophets, and which these Christian writers understand as having descended from heaven to take flesh and appear on earth as Mary's son.²¹⁷

Those who have become temples of Christ are participating in Christ, which allows them not only to function as holy people on the earth but also to participate in the heavenly realm. But the indwelling of the Divine cannot be separated from the sacraments of Christ and his church. So all three realms of temple-ness are present even in Aphrahat's christology, that of the person, the church, and heaven.

Aphrahat's christology is very Pauline and scripturally based. Aphrahat writes concerning the incarnation, the dwelling of Christ in the faithful, and of Christ working with the Holy Spirit. He also uses various titles for Christ and defends the power and singleness of Jesus. We have addressed what

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²¹⁶ Cf. D 21:8 (PS I/954.11), D 21:19 (PS I/980.15–16), D 22:2 (PS I/996.23), and D 23:11 (PS II/32.8–9). For a full discussion of this imagery, see also Sebastian Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition," in *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1982), 11–38. Gen 3:21 describes the garments of skin which must be cast off. These were identified with the human body in both Jewish and Christian authors. This motif is also examined in April DeConick and Jarl Fossum, "Stripped Before God: A New Interpretation of Logion 37 in the Gospel of Thomas," VC 45 (1991): 123–150.

²¹⁷ Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam," 301.

Aphrahat writes about Christ in a person who has faith; the next step in the transformation of a person into a temple is the sacramental realization of this faith in the church community through baptism and the eucharist.

ECCLESIOLOGY

The basis upon which everything builds in Aphrahat's theology is, of course, faith in Jesus Christ. The sage's christology is deep and filled with scriptural evidence, both from the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament. His ecclesiology is tightly interwoven with his christology. As Aphrahat writes: "He [Jesus] is the Priest, the Holy Minister; let us labor to become sons of his dwelling place." Christ is the priest of people and place. The dwelling place of Christ includes heaven, the church, and the devout followers' temples of the heart, as we shall see below. Aphrahat writes so much about the temple that one might assume that the temple and Christian church are synonymous; this is inaccurate. He never refers to the Christian community with the term temple (hayklā); temple is the individual person or the Jerusalem temple. The Sage primarily uses the term (hayklā) for the Christian church. 200

Aphrahat's ecclesiology, or supposed lack thereof, has come under criticism from no less a Syriac scholar than R. Murray, as he writes: "Our authors [Aphrahat and Ephrem] are well aware of the divine indwelling in each Christian as in a temple, but of it in the whole Church as in a temple

²¹⁸ D 14:39 (PS I/684.6–7)

היה בסמים מהיצא: מעב במבל הנחסא כד, הידים מסמס Aphrahat refers to Jesus as the priest in D 2:6 (PS I/57.21–23), D 6:13 (PS I/289.21–22), D 17:11 (PS I/813.11), D 21:13 (PS I/964.15–18), D 23:20 (PS II/65.5).

²¹⁹ For the heart motif in Aphrahat, see page 110.

they seem much less aware."²²¹ In my opinion, this assessment must be modified somewhat; Aphrahat has a pastoral and polemical focus upon the individual persons within his larger church community. He is writing about faith and living the Christian life, not ecclesiology. Murray even states quite categorically that Aphrahat has a very non-sacramental understanding of the relation between Christ and humans:

Aphrahat never develops the idea of the solidarity of Christ's body with our bodily nature in such a way as to make the doctrine implicitly sacramental and ecclesiological. As F. Gavin observed, though Aphrahat lived a century and a half later than Irenaeus, his christology is hardly more developed; his ecclesiology, at least in relation to Christ's body, is even less so.²²²

Such a comparison with a Latin father as Irenaeus is unfair to the Syrian Aphrahat. In defense of Aphrahat, he takes the visible church and the sacraments as a given and focuses on the individuals within his community. However, there are other Syriac authors who are at pains to emphasize the importance of the visible church, for example, Macarius²²³ and the *Liber*

²²¹ Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 344.

²²² Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 70. Cf. Gavin, "Aphraates and the Jews," 107.

²²³ Macarius was probably a North Eastern Syrian monastic who wrote in the second half of the fourth century. He may be a later contemporary to Aphrahat who has very similar concerns, and also uses imagery especially centred upon the temple of God. The use of the symbol of temple of God within the Macarian homilies allows us to see a continuum of ideas from the Hebrew scriptures, through the New Testament to Origen and beyond. The critical edition of the Homilies is: Makarios, *Die 50 Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, vol. 4, ed. Hermann Dörries (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1964). For a manuscript history and general introduction to the life and times of Macarius see Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, trans. George A. Maloney (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 1–33.

Some key articles on Macarius, his Temple imagery, and relation to other thinkers are: Alexander Golitzin, "Temple and Throne of the Divine Glory: Pseudo-Macarius' and Purity of Heart, Together with Some Remarks on the Limitations and Usefulness of Scholarship," in *Purity of Heart in Early Ascetic and Monastic Literature*, eds. Harriet Luckman and Linda Kulzer (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 107–130; Andrei Orlov and Alexander Golitzin, "Many Lamps are Lightened from the One": Paradigms of the Transformational Vision in Macarian Homilies," VC 54 (2001): 1–18; Alexander Golitzin, "A Testimony to Christianity

Graduum.²²⁴ Even though Aphrahat does not write extensively about the communal body of Christ due to his emphasis on the individual's spiritual-

as Transfiguration," chap. in *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality*, ed. S. T. Kimbrough, Jr. (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 129–156; Simon Tugwell, "Evagrius and Macarius," in *Study of Spirituality*, eds. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 168–175 and Kallistos Ware, "Prayer in Evagrius of Pontus and the Macarian Homilies," in *An Introduction to Christian Spirituality*, eds. Ralph Waller and Benedicta Ward (London: SPCK, The Cromwell Press, 1999), 14–30. Macarius has many discernable influences including Clement of Alexandria, Origen, the *Diatessaron*, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa.

²²⁴ The Liber Graduum also known as the Book of Steps or Degrees (Ketabā demasqatā), henceforth LG. This text was written presumably anywhere from the early mid fourth to the early fifth century C.E. The probable provenance for these texts is somewhere near the River Zab in the Persian Empire. Brock, Syriac Fathers on Prayer, 42-53. There is an English translation by Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F. G. Parmentier, The Book of Steps: the Syriac Liber Graduum (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2004). No consensus on the doctrinal 'orthodoxy' of the LG exists at the moment. After M. Kmosko's introduction and Latin translation in 1926, the LG was set in the Messalian heretical camp by many scholars. It was also diagnosed with pronounced encratite tendencies. See René Graffin, Patrologia Syriaca, vol. 3, Liber Graduum, ed. M. Kmosko (Paris: 1926). It was not until 1954 that Arthur Vööbus showed that this verdict is far from conclusive in his article "Liber Graduum: Some Aspects of its Significance for the History of Early Syrian Asceticism," chap. in Charisteria Iohanni Kôpp, Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile, 7 (Stockholm:1954), 108–128. C. Stewart in his definitive work on Messalianism suggests: "Categorical denunciation of Messalian errors may be seen to rest largely on misunderstanding of unfamiliar terminology, and culture joins with (and perhaps supplants) doctrine as the basis of controversy." Columba Stewart, Working the Earth of the Heart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 69. See also Robert Kitchen's introductory remarks about the Messalian controversy in The Book of Steps, xix-xxi. The Liber Graduum is an anonymous collection of 30 memre or homilies about living the Christian life with a pronounced ascetic bent. R. Murray observes that the "homilies represent a somewhat isolated spirituality and cultural milieu and speak with tones unlike those of Aphrahat and Ephrem." Robert Murray, "The Characteristics of the Earliest Syriac Christianity," in East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period, eds. Nina G. Garsoian, Thomas F. Mathews, and Richard W. Thompson, (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982), 4. This observation must be tempered slightly since the LG does share some common features with the Macarian corpus, though admittedly without any direct literary connections. Sebastian Brock, "The Syriac Tradition," in The Study of Spirituality, ed. Edward J. Yarnold (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 207. It is thanks to the work of these later scholars that the LG has slowly emerged as a peity, he maintains the centrality of the eucharist and baptism.²²⁵ The depth of the sage's description of the incarnation in *Dem.* Seventeen "On the Messiah, that he is the Son of God" and throughout all the texts makes Murray's conclusion about Aphrahat's theology difficult to accept.

The key to Aphrahat's ecclesiology is the action of communal worship by the people of God. As he explains:

For we know that God is one, [we] will confess, worship, praise, exalt, honor, sanctify, and glorify his greatness, through Jesus his Son, our Savior, who chose us for himself and brought us to him. In him we know [God] and have become worshippers of him: a people, a church, a holy congregation. Praise and glory to the Father, and to his Son and to his living and Holy Spirit, from the mouths of all those who praise him, above and below, forever and ever, amen and amen!²²⁶

The last sentence of this passage sounds as though Aphrahat is quoting from the liturgy of his day; it has a very melodic tone. The sage emphasizes that it is through faith in Jesus that his audience may be gathered together and worship God. The actions of the community mirror the actions of the angels around the heavenly throne. Even here on earth, the community is becoming like the angelic host. Aphrahat describes what the angels do in heaven in two important passages. These excerpts will be discussed further later in our study.²²⁷ Our primary concern here is the action of the angels, to praise, glorify, and sanctify God. The first passage is *Dem.* 14:39 "All the Watchers are eager to minister to him and the Seraphs cry 'holy' to his

culiar yet important text witnessing to Syriac spirituality roughly contemporary to Aphrahat and Ephrem. The temple imagery in this text illuminates some concerns in common with Aphrahat, but there are differences in doctrinal emphases between the two.

 $^{^{225}}$ See below, sections entitled "Baptism" page 64 and "Eucharist" page 68.

²²⁶ D 23:61 (PS II/128.7–17)

glory, flying with their swift wings."228 The second is *Dem.* 18:4 "They [the angels] rush and swiftly fly with their wings, calling, sanctifying, and exalting his majesty."229 So the angels do the same as the God's people—worship. This is how the Christians become God's people, his church, his holy congregation.

Aphrahat's worship community also had the three-fold clerical ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, as well as the Covenanters, and lay people. He addresses his readers in *Dem.* Fourteen: "all our brothers, the members of the Church, here and there, bishops, priests, deacons and all the Church of God, with all its children here and there among us." Aphrahat is also very upset about the destruction of the church, including the buildings. He writes of the persecution of the Christians under Shapur II and mentions that the houses of God were ruined, the altars were overturned, and priests massacred.²³¹

Aphrahat's ecclesiology is not overt; he does not write that the church is Christ's body in so many words. He does write that the community of God worships him, and he uses the same verbs to describe this action that he uses for the angels who worship at the heavenly throne. Jesus is also the Priest, and to have a priest one must have a church. Aphrahat's pastoral concerns for his audience outweigh his interest in outlining how the church is the body of Christ in some modern manner. Rather, he edifies his congregants so that they may become temples of God and thereby be saved. They must participate in the communal life of the church, and the sacraments, especially baptism and the eucharist, to reach this state of "templeness."

²²⁸ D 14:35 (PS I/664.2-4)

نصرف حل عنة معمده معتدم معتدم كالمام والمارة والمناه والمناه المناهم المناهم المناهم المناهم المناهم المناهم ا

See further, Chapter Five, Passage #1, page 139.

²²⁹ D 18:4 (PS I/828.12–14)

علمه حتر حيره المان المهن معتم المعتقعات المهاد المهاد المهاد المهاد المهاد المهاد الماد ا

 $^{^{231}}$ D 23:53 (PS II/105.21–27) and D 23:56 (PS II/113.15–24). For further discussion about the persecutions see page 86.

BAPTISM

Aphrahat describes two means by which Christ enters into a person: baptism and eucharist. It is through baptism that the Spirit of Christ first enters into the believing person.²³² As Aphrahat explains:

We receive the Spirit of Christ from baptism. When the priests call upon the Spirit, the heaven[s] open and the Spirit descends and hovers²³³

²³² The scholarly debate about baptism and the Covenanters or *qyāmā*, as described in Demonstrations Six and Seven begins with F. C. Burkitt's hypothesis that only those who were to lead a celibate life were baptized in Aphrahat's community. Francis C. Burkitt, Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire (Cambridge University Press, 1899; reprint, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002), 49-54. These lectures are a reprint of Early Eastern Christianity St. Margaret's Lectures 1904 on the Syriac Speaking Church, London: John Murray, 1904. See also Francis C. Burkitt, "Aphraates and Monasticism: A Reply," ITS 7 (1906): 10–15. Connolly refutes Burkitt's position suggesting that Aphrahat's concern is for his celibate audience and that they take baptism very seriously. Those of the community who wished to be married should do so before baptism, but they are not excluded from baptism because of marriage. Richard H. Connolly, "Aphraates and Monasticism," ITS 6 (1905): 538-539. Duncan follows Connolly's position in his book, Baptism in the Demonstrations, 82-103. Vööbus suggests a solution to the dilemma, that Aphrahat retains an older liturgical tradition which was previously practiced and is no longer followed in Aphrahat's time. Therefore, there was a time when only the celibates were baptized but now all lay people are baptized, celibate and married alike. Arthur Vööbus, "Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Syrian Church," in Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile Vol. 1. (Stockholm:1951), 35-58. See also Thomas W. Manson, "Entry to Membership of the Early Church," ITS (Old Series) 48 (1947): 25-32; Taeke Jansma, "Aphraates' Demonstration VII §§ 18 and 20. Some Observations on the Discourse on Penance," ParOr 5 (1974): 21-48. Murray's classic article puts this debate to rest. He concludes that all were baptized, but that Aphrahat's primary concern was for those ascetics who lapsed after baptism and who needed to repent. Robert Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows a Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church," NTS 21 (1974): 59-80. See also Jaroslav Z. Skira, "Circumcise Thy Heart': Aphrahat's Theology of Baptism," Diakonia 31, 2 (1998): 115-128.

233 Syr. نعد rhap means to brood, hover over, cherish, take pity or care of. Payne-Smith, 538. Aphrahat uses the verb three times, the Genesis 1:2 quotation of this passage; D 10:2 (PS I/ 448.6) in allusion to Exodus 32:31–32 explaining that Moses is a compassionate pastor and father who "cherishes" his children; and in D 14:14 (PS I/604.26) in a long excursus on love from the John 15:12 passage, Aphrahat writes: "Love shows compassion, cares, (عند المعارفة) gathers together, draws near, encourages, and makes glad." The verbal imagery from the Genesis

upon the waters (Gen 1:2). And those who are baptized are clothed in him; for the Spirit is distant from all who are born in body; they come to the birth by water, and then they receive the Holy Spirit.²³⁴

Aphrahat is very clear: one cannot receive the Spirit and become a dwelling place for God without first being baptized. The sacrament of baptism is a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith, as he states: "[You] should furthermore also believe in the mystery of baptism." Baptism is a sacrament for Aphrahat, though this may not be self evident from the previous quotation. Mystery, razā in Syriac, means sacrament, secret, or Holy Eucharist. So the "mystery of baptism" is the sacrament of baptism.

If a person rejects the sacrament of baptism then the person will be condemned. As the Sage declares: "And again when our Lord gave the mystery of baptism to his apostles, he said to them: Whoever believes and is baptized will live, and whoever does not believe will be judged." 237 Faith

passage suggests not only that the Spirit hovers but also loves and protects the person who is baptized.

²³⁴ D 6:14 (PS I/292.24–293.5)

Gen 1:2 as a baptismal typology is common throughout Syriac tradition. As S. Brock discusses the hovering verb is used as an analogy to the dove descending at Jesus' baptism, see Sebastian P. Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, ed. J. Vallian (Indian: Anita, 1979). Cf. Duncan, *Baptism in the Demonstrations*, 123–147; Vööbus, "Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism," 52 ff.; Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan*, vol. 1: 107–111, 162–163 and 174–177; Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates," 58–80; Skira, "Circumcise Thy Heart," 115–128; and Geoffrey G. Willis, "What was the Earliest Syrian Baptismal Tradition?" chap. in *Studia Evengelica* 6, TU 112 (1973): 65–654.

באס בי מינד אב באיז א זיאר המבאסג (PS I/44.19–20) באל באסג האיז א זיאר א האיז אויאר מאנדי אויאר באר באסגע באסגע

²³⁶ Payne-Smith, 28. Aphrahat uses the term over forty times throughout the *Demonstrations*. The majority of references are to the "mystery of baptism" or to the eucharist, see for example, D 4:5 (PS I/145.10–24) and D 12:2 (PS I/508.7–22). See also Edmund Beck, "Symbolum-Mysterium bei Aphraat und Ephräm," *OrChr*, 42 (1958): 19–40.

237 D 1:17 (PS I/41.2–5) citing Mark 16:16. See also D 6:14 (PS I/291, 294). ב. מסב הסב אינו אינוא ומבאסה הלא של מסב מל אינו אינו איני ומסב הלאה מבא איני מל האווא המשבה הלאהם. הלא המשבה הלאה הלא המשבה הלאהם.

and baptism are inexorably linked in Aphrahat's work, following the precepts of scripture.

Aphrahat finds typological imagery for the sacrament of baptism in several passages of the Hebrew scriptures. In Dem. Twelve, Aphrahat explains that the Israelites crossing the red sea is a baptism, as is the washing of the disciples' feet at Passover.²³⁸

For Israel was baptized in the middle of the sea on that Passover night of the day of salvation, and our Savior washed the feet of his disciples on the Passover night, [which is] the mystery of baptism. You should know, my friend, that our Savior gave the true baptism that night, for as he was living with his disciples, they were baptized in that baptism of the law of the priests. As [this is] the baptism that John spoke: "Repent of your sins!" On that night he showed them the mystery of the baptism of suffering at his death, as the apostle said, "You have been buried with him in baptism for death, and you rise with him through the power of God."239

The mystery of baptism as the foot washing seems slightly peculiar, but the Sage is using the term baptism as the linking word for various scriptural passages to argue his polemical point. His argument is that the Christian Passover is the true one. Aphrahat starts with Exodus 14, the Israelite baptism at Passover, moves to Jesus' Passover and finds the common element of water. So the foot washing of the disciples becomes the baptism that Jesus himself performed and thus the true one in comparison to the Exodus baptism of Israel.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Exodus 14 and the connection to baptism is in 1 Cor 10:2.

²³⁹ D 12:10 (PS I/528.22–529.8)

בדה ניו אישול כנה נדא כמה ללא ופישא ביחדא ופחוטאי ماعب ودوم و بالم المراتب المراتب المراتب المراتب المرحدة المراتب المرحدة المراتب المرا مدلاد له أدم سحيح دعدهم لشه للله صديم הכברים השליא השליא כלל הברא הבת מלדיהם היי בילמפת מסא היי בארזי איא ווהנטסא ורבשוא באבויל שיטט: באביטיניקא ווהנטסא ויאיבו השבי וות בעור יחור שבישטי סבשם לא אוו בישבטויים ביים איוו בישבטויים ביים איוו בישבטויים ביים איוו בישבטויים ביי Kush icopen wy iski stude iski wik asasi keui ומחליז משב במש בשוח האחשל

²⁴⁰ For further information about Passover, Pascha, and baptism, see: Thomas J. Talley, The Origins of the Liturgical Year (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 33-47; Alexander Schmemann, Of Water and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 37-70; and Aidan

Aphrahat finds another Hebrew scripture example of baptism in *Dem.* Seven, "On Repentance." Aphrahat uses Judges 7 to explain that Gideon's testing of his army is a foreshadowing of baptism. Gideon's testing before the battle is: "[...] a great mystery, my friend, that Gideon²⁴¹ prefigured: this is the type²⁴² of baptism, the mystery of combat,²⁴³ and the example to the single ones."²⁴⁴ Gideon's actions are a type for baptism, which in turn gives an example of how one should behave after being baptized. Aphrahat argues that baptism involves testing and that only a few are chosen who must then be loyal to the master like the dogs who lap at the water as Gideon's select warriors did. The combat of Gideon's soldiers becomes an image of how the ascetics battle against the Evil One.²⁴⁵

This passage created some controversy among scholars of the early twentieth century. F. C. Burkitt, in 1904, interpreted this passage to mean that "In Aphraates, baptism is not the common seal of every Christian's faith, but a privilege reserved for celibates."²⁴⁶ A. Vööbus agrees with Burkitt's analysis that baptism in Aphrahat's community is relegated to an initiation for the elite, not the average Christian adherent.²⁴⁷ R. Murray takes a middle position, explaining: "Aphrahat is an ascetic writing for ascetics, in a context where he urges them to remember the seriousness of their special commitment at baptism, yet not to despair if they fall. They still can be healed by secret and confidential treatment."²⁴⁸ S. Griffith argues that the

Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation* (New York: Pueblo Pub, 1978). In the Anglican tradition, on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week, the footwashing was originally done by the bishops for the priests, but in recent years it has become a parish custom. There is no reference to baptism in the readings for the day; the imagery is wholly eucharistic and paschal. See *The Book of Common Prayer: The Episcopal Church*, ed. Charles M. Guilbert (Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, 1977), 274–275.

- ²⁴¹ Judges 7:2–8.
- ²⁴² The Syriac term is κωναλ, *tupsā* from the Greek root word τύπος.
- ²⁴³ Combat is the translation for King 'aygunā. See further on page 78.
- ²⁴⁴ D 7:19 (PS I/344.21–25)

וב פס גין מוא אווא עביב, גפגע בגבה סעה, להפשא געבער אווא האווא בארא הוערא האוער אוערא א

- 245 See the following section entitled "The Singles," page 73.
- ²⁴⁶ Burkitt, Early Christianity, 82.
- ²⁴⁷ Arthur Vööbus, "The Institution of the *benai qeiâmâ* and *benat qeiâmâ* in the Ancient Syrian Church," *Church History* 30 (1961): 19–27.
- ²⁴⁸ Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 202 and Murray, "Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows" where he dedicates a whole article to this issue.

select group makes a solemn pledge of celibacy at baptism, but this does not necessarily mean that non-ascetics were not baptized.²⁴⁹ The scholarly consensus today is that Aphrahat is speaking in this passage to his specifically celibate audience who dedicated themselves to Christ when they were baptized as adults. As R. Murray explains: "it [*Dem.* 7.18–20] simply expresses the practice and ideology of the *Bnay Qyāmā*, with no implications to be legitimately drawn for the laity."²⁵⁰ The elite, or the Sons of the Covenant, were to be examples for all Christians. The moment of baptism is the point at which they made their oaths.

Part of the difficulty with baptism in Aphrahat's writings is the confusion about his audience. Some of his demonstrations are addressed to the greater church including lay people, such as Demonstrations Fourteen and Twenty-Three; others are specifically directed to the ascetic members of his community, especially the *qyāmā*, such as Demonstrations Six and Seven. Some scholars have disregarded this key piece of information. Aphrahat upholds both the sanctity of baptism for all faithful and stresses the necessity of repentance and forgiveness within his ascetic audience. I conclude, following Dr. Griffith's research, that Aphrahat emphatically teaches that his ascetics should not take their baptismal vows in a cavalier manner. Aphrahat's writings do not allow us to say with absolute certainty that the non-ascetic laity were excluded from baptism or other sacraments of the church. Aphrahat's primary concern for his ascetics means that we can only speak to his views about them with any confidence. Baptism sets the stage for the person to receive the Divine Spirit, and the next stage of development in becoming a temple for God is the eucharist, participating in the body and blood of Jesus.

EUCHARIST

Baptism is the initial means by which the Spirit enters into the person, according to Aphrahat. The eucharist is the means by which the Spirit nourishes the person. Baptism and eucharist work in concert to allow the person's prayer to be heard by God and sins removed. As Aphrahat explains:

²⁴⁹ Sidney Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: the Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism," in *Asceticism*, ed. Victor Wimbush (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 238.

²⁵⁰ Murray, "The Characteristics of the Earliest Syriac," 7–8.

The only purification is by the water of baptism and partaking of the body and blood of Christ. Blood is made holy by the Blood, and the body is cleaned by the Body.²⁵¹

Through baptism the person is cleaned enough to be able to offer prayer as the sacrifice and to participate in the eucharist. In his only direct Gospel quotation about the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples, Aphrahat writes:

For our redeemer ate the paschal lamb with his disciples on the night of the fourteenth and in truth he made the sign of the paschal sacrifices for his disciples. After Judas left them, Jesus took the bread, blessed and gave it to his disciples, saying to them, "This is my body. All of you take and eat from it." He also blessed the wine, saying to them, "This is my blood of the new testament, which on behalf²⁵² of many is shed for the

²⁵¹ D 4:19 (PS I/181.12–14)

252 Syr. Alap is the same verb root in the *Peshitta* version as in Aphrahat's quotation. Payne-Smith defines the preposition as "instead of, on account of, or on behalf of." The root verb means to exchange, substitute, to pierce, or shear. In the *Pa'el*, it means to change, exchange, or renew. (Payne-Smith, 144) This verb is also used in the Odes of Solomon 4:1–3 for the sanctuary not being able to be changed or moved. See further about the Odes, page 121. The Eucharistic implications of the sacrifice both on behalf of and changing those for whom it is sacrificed is intriguing.

Aphrahat also uses <u>blap</u> to describe the experience in which a human person becomes heavenly at the Resurrection. "Thus also when the dead come to life, the righteous will be changed, and the earthly form will be swallowed up by the heavenly, and it will be called a heavenly body. And that which is not changed, shall be called earthly." D 8:5 (PS I/369.13–17).

מביא אפ בעול מולא מסא שליים איי בייא האולא מראס אויים איי אייביא איי בייא איי סגאס אלעב א אייביא אייביא אייביא אייביא אייביא אייביא מאטלא מאלייא אייביא אי

In reference to the Transfiguration, Aphrahat uses <u>blap</u> for Jesus' appearance being transformed into the likeness of his coming, D 23:12 (PS II/36.14). The sanctuary, eucharist, Transfiguration, and Resurrection are all connected by Aphrahat with this one verb.

forgiveness of sins. When you are gathered together do this in my memory. (Matt 26:26, 28)²⁵³

The Sage quotes exactly the Matthean witness to the Last Supper and only mentions the other Gospel witnesses to this event in a cursory manner.²⁵⁴ Aphrahat's primary concern is his polemical agenda comparing the Jewish Passover events and the Christian eucharistic traditions.

In one of many comparisons between the Jewish and Christian paschal sacrifices Aphrahat provides a long litany of comparisons between Joshua (Yeshua) son of Nun and Joshua (Jesus) our Redeemer to show that the Christian covenant of Jesus' death surpasses all of the previous covenants. Aphrahat writes:

Yeshua the son of Nun made a paschal sacrifice in the camp at Jericho in the cursed land, and the people ate from the bread of the land; Yeshua our redeemer made a paschal sacrifice with his disciples in Jerusalem, the city which he cursed: "There should not remain in it stone upon stone" (Matt 24:2) and there he gave the mystery in the bread of life.²⁵⁵

سجل بن فنمم فوسم حمر الملتخدة والله بابنه المانحسنة المامه الموسم وعنائه عدد المراه الملتخدة والله المام المامه ا

שהב כינה בבי פבעה כפבלה והיושה כהובה לולאה השרח בכא כל המבא ואובאי השהב פיסם בכו פבעא בע ארבינהם. באהישלע סיתא ולאה ולא ולשולכם כם כאפ בל כאפ: היים ולכל איוא כלעבא וועא.

²⁵³ D 12:6 (PS I/516.19–517.4)

dogs licking the wounds of Lazarus and that we are the dogs who are loyal to the Master, Jesus, because by tasting His blood we are licking his wounds. Aphrahat has a very positive view of dogs; the Sons of the Covenant are to follow an *imitatio canine*. D 7:21 (PS I/ 349) is a discussion of how Christians are to be like loyal dogs and not greedy ones. Aphrahat uses also Judg. 7:41 as a starting point for this exegesis coupled with Isa 56:10–11. Cf. D 20:8 (PS I/905).

²⁵⁵ D 11:12 (PS I/501.26–504.6)

The Jewish precursor of Passover and the Last Supper of Jesus have their importance because of the individual's participation in them. Aphrahat comments that:

These are indeed great mysteries. Whoever eats from the true lamb, the Christ, girds up his loins in faith, and puts on his sandals in the preparation of the Gospel, and holds in his hand the spiritual sword which is the word of God.²⁵⁶

The complete event of the Passover and Exodus from Egypt of the Jewish community is now internalized for the individual Christian through the sacrifice of Jesus and the individual's eating of that Passover, i.e., the reception of the eucharist. Yet again, Aphrahat is presenting an "internalized" interpretation of a Biblical text commonly interpreted at its basic "external" level.

The localization and internalization of the paschal sacrifice is crucial for Aphrahat's eucharistic theology. The mouth and lips have important roles to play in the salvation of the person. Aphrahat states that: "Our mouth becomes sufficient for you [Christ] and you dwell in us."²⁵⁷ Now that a person has received Christ, Aphrahat tells what must be done: pure prayer. As Aphrahat commends in *Dem.* Four, "On Prayer": "Our Lord's word tells us to 'pray in secret in your heart, and shut the door' (Matt 6:6). What is the door he says to shut, if not your mouth?"²⁵⁸ Aphrahat tells people in whom Christ dwells to be silent and pray. Taking Aphrahat's analogy

See also Origen, *Homily on Numbers XX,1,5–6 to XX,2,3* and *De Principiis, vol. III.* Origène, *Homélies Sur Les Nombres III*, SC vol. 461, ed. Louis Doutreleau (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2001), 20–29; and Origène, *Traité Des Principes*, Vol. III, 210–217.

For a study of the Quatrodecimin and other Pascal implications of Aphrahat's twelfth Demonstration see Gerard A. M. Rouwhorst, *Les Hymnes Pascales d'Ephrem de Nisibe*, vol. VII, 1, *Supp VC* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 131–157.

صفع لم عمد: محمد الم عمد الم 23:59 (PS II/121.10–11) و 25.7 D و 23:59

The mouth is one of the main ways to sin, according to Aphrahat. See the following for a more complete discussion of sin and 'grieving the Spirit,' page 122.

²⁵⁸ D 4:10 (PS I/157.19-21)

המעה ל בלאה הכין: הלה לב בבמיח בלבף: האעה הוצה. המנה הוצה האכין אנה אלה א בהפיף

²⁵⁶ D 12:9 (PS I/525.23–528.2) (Eph. 6:14–17)

further, one might wish to argue that he is suggesting that the only pure prayer is that which is silent. The eucharist received by the mouth allows the mouth to then function as it should—silently.

In this chapter, we have examined Aphrahat's anthropology with a view to his temple theology. The foundation for all of the Sage's theology is the scriptures. His use of the temple image is especially formed by Jer 7:4-5, Lev 26:12, 1 Cor 3:16, 2 Cor 6:16, and John 14:20. He encapsulates his views in the very first Demonstration, "On Faith" Dem. 1:3. Faith in, and becoming a temple of, Jesus Christ are the two pillars of Aphrahat's temple theology. The problem of death because of the first Adam's disobedience is solved by the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. A key theme of Aphrahat's christology is how the great became small and the mighty became feeble. "Your majesty burrows into the little heart, you have made of us temples wherein your glory dwells."259 The Divine compresses himself into the little heart of the human being, not only at the incarnation but also when a faithful person becomes a temple of God. Nevertheless, these people who have become little temples must still function within the larger temple, the church. For Aphrahat, the church and its importance and functions are a given. The sacraments of baptism and eucharist provide the means for the Spirit of Christ to enter into and continually nourish the person.²⁶⁰ Aphrahat's ecclesiology is not a defense of the communal worship of God by his people. His pastoral concern is for the spiritual welfare of his individual audience members. A person who is living on earth and who is a follower of Jesus Christ is to labor towards being a temple for God in all aspects: body, will, and spirit. This person is the ascetic.

 $^{^{259}}$ D 23:59 (PS II/121.12–13)

[:] Minch Kirsh Land Rich Rich Rich Mani Allun 260 There are clergy members in Aphrahat's community, but no specific mention of ordination. The Sage also writes a whole demonstration about repentance, Dem. 7, but we do not have specific evidence of the sacramental standing for ordination nor confession in his church.

2 THE ASCETICS

The process of becoming a temple of God begins with faith in Christ together with baptism and eucharist. The next step is the practice of a strict asceticism, the first requirement of which is celibacy. Aphrahat uses different terms for the ascetics in his community: they are the single ones (حنيد ihidayē), the Covenanters (حدة معده bnay qyāmā), the virgins (حكة btulē), and the holy ones (addishe). The common denominator amongst them is that they are celibate and dedicated to following Jesus Christ. The terms are very flexible and Aphrahat himself uses interchangeably ihidayē, qyāmā, qaddishē and btulē. However, ihidayē is the all encompassing term for the celibate followers of the Ihidaya, Jesus Christ. The Covenanters, virgins, and holy ones are all *ihidayē*. The virgins comprise both males and females; the more common term for a female ascetic is virgin. For a male ascetic, the term Covenanter is more usual. The last category of ascetics, the holy ones, is the most distinct from the others. These ascetics are those who were married and now wish to completely dedicate themselves to Christ in celibacy. One cannot be a "holy one" and a "virgin;" however, a virgin may be a holy one. According to Aphrahat, only a celibate ascetic Christian who is completely dedicated to God may become a temple of God.

THE SINGLES (IHIDAYE)

"We are from Adam, and here we know a little. This alone we know: there is one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one faith, and one baptism." The one, solitary, or single is an essential concept for Aphrahat. The single ones or ihidayē are those who follow Christ, the one son of God. As

²⁶¹ D 23:60 (PS II/124.10–13) Syriac is on page 43.

²⁶² The term *ibidayē* in reference to the fourth century ascetics will be translated as "the Singles." The term "singles" is used eight times in the *Demonstrations* to refer to the followers of Christ: D 6:4 (PS I/261.1), D 6:6 (PS I/269.3), D 6:8 (PS I/272.21), D 6:8 (PS I/276.19), D 7:18 (PS I/341.23), D 7:19 (PS I/344.25), D7:25 (PS I/356.8) and D8:23 (PS I/404.6). The term is used another way in D 22:7 (PS I/1004.10) where it refers to those who trust in the world, and the end result is that Death shall win. "He (Death) leads away for himself the precious only-begotten

Aphrahat explains: "The Single one (*Ibidayā*) who is from the bosom of his Father shall make all the singles (*ibidayā*) glad."²⁶³ He explains this idea further writing that: "These things are suitable for the single ones who have accepted the heavenly yoke and have become disciples of Christ. Likewise it is appropriate for the disciples of Christ to be like their Lord."²⁶⁴ The ascetics are Christ's disciples and should emulate him by being single in every sense of the word. To place *Ibidayā* within a context, in the *Peshitta* NT, it refers to God the Father's only Son in John 1:14,18; 3:16,18. The term is also applied in the simpler sense for those people in the scriptures who are the sole offspring of their parents.²⁶⁵ The singles have no earthly parents once they become the offspring of Jesus. This is a "radical discipleship of Jesus."²⁶⁶ *Ibidayā* was a familiar technical term by the mid fourth century for both Christ and his ascetic followers. The most general, all encompassing term for Aphrahat's ascetic audience members is the Singles, the *ibidayē*.²⁶⁷

children حن معتد *bar i<u>h</u>idayē*, and their parents will be deprived of them and will be judged."

²⁶³ D 6:6 (PS I/269.3–4)

בארם בארם הארבה למחם. מעוד א למחם בארם הארם בארם The title "Only Begotten" for Jesus Christ is used three times in the *Demonstra*-

The title "Only Begotten" for Jesus Christ is used three times in the *Demonstrations*, D 6:6, D 23:52, and D 23:53. D 23:52 (PS II/100.15–17) "We give thanks to you for the love of Him who has been given by you, who has desired that we live by the death of his Only Begotten One (multiple)."

²⁶⁴ D 6:8 (PS I/276.18–22)

سلم مرب کرن کا میں درست مرب کرنے کا مرب کرنے کی مرب مرب کرنے کی کی مرب کرنے کی م

²⁶⁵ Son of widow of Nain in Luke 7:12, the possessed son in Luke 9:38, Jairus' daughter in Luke 8:49. Cf. S. Griffith, "Singles," 149–150, and Kiraz, ed., *Concordance to the Syriac New Testament*, s.v. "August."

²⁶⁶ Thomas K. Koonammakkal, "Ephrem's Ideas on Singleness," *Hugoye, Vol. 2, No. 1*, http://www.leidenuniv.nl/gg/peshitta/syrcom/Hugoye/Vol2No1/HV2 N1Koonammakkal.html:Jan. 1999, paragraph 4.

²⁶⁷ For further discussion of the term *ihidayē* and its function within Syriac spirituality see Sidney Griffith, "'Singles' in God's Service; Thoughts on the Ihidaye from the Works of Aphrahat and Ephraem the Syrian," *The Harp* IV, 1,2,3 July

Many scholars have studied the Syrian singles to determine their origin and specific function within the church. R. Murray defines the Singles as:

- (1) becoming 'single' by accepting Christ's call to leave dear ones, (2) becoming single-minded, by accepting 'circumcision of the heart,' and
- (3) 'putting on' the *Ihîdāyâ*, Christ, and thus 'standing up' for him as a sort of representative, and thereby joining the *Qyāmâ*, the 'heart' of the Church.²⁶⁸

(1991): 145–159; *idem*, "Monks, 'Singles,' and the 'Sons of the Covenant,' Reflections on Syriac Ascetic Terminology," 141–160; and A. J. van der Aalst, "A l'origine du monachisme syrien: Les 'ihidaye' chez Aphrahat," in *Fructus Centesimus*, eds. Antoon Bastiaensen, et al. (Steenbrugis: Kluwer, 1989): 315–324. R. Murray observes that *ihidayā* may be a synonym for μονογενής and μοναχος in Greek. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 13. Eusebius of Caesarea also uses the term μοναχος to refer to one who retires to the desert in solitude, for example in Egypt. The emphasis differs in Aphrahat's community, rather than geographic solitude; spiritual and sexual solitude is crucial for the *ihidayā*. (Cf. Antoine Guillaumont, "Monachisme et Éthique Judéo-Chrétienne," *RSR* 60, 1 (Jan–Mar 1972): 199–218.) The Single one idea is also found in *The Gospel of Thomas* log. 4, 11, 16, 22, 23, 49, 75, and 106. Cf. A. F. J. Klijn, "The "Single One' in the Gospel of Thomas," *JBL* LXXXI (1962): 271–278. *Iḥidayā* themes are also in *The Acts of Judas Thomas* #48, 60, 80, 122, 143. See too, A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas* and A. Baker, "Fasting to the World," *JBL* 84 (1965): 291–294; and AbouZayd, *Ihidayutha*.

²⁶⁸ Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 16.

²⁶⁹ Guillaumont even uses Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* to help explain the celibacy of the Qumran community. His argument is more complex than is presented here in the barest of outlines. For his full argument see his articles: "A Propos du Célibat des Esséniens," in *Hommages a André Dupont-Sommer*, (Paris: Andrien-Maisonneuve, 1971), 395–404 and "Perspectives Actuelles sur les Origines du

over arching category for his ascetics, within the group there are various subcategories: covenanters, virgins, and holy ones. He does not keep the subcategories separate from each other; there is some confusion with his terminology.

The principal aspect of the singles who follow Christ is that they are exactly that, single, in all aspects of their lives—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. As Aphrahat explains:

And it is said, "The two of them should be one flesh." (Gen. 2:24). And this is true, for as a man and woman become one flesh and one mind, and his intelligence and thought²⁷⁰ separate from his father and his mother, so too a man who has not yet taken a wife but remains single in one spirit and one mind with his Father.²⁷¹

Aphrahat argues that this Genesis passage is applicable to both married and celibate people. For the man who marries a woman, his mind becomes attached to concerns of this world; for the single one, his mind is attached to God. The key idea is singleness of mind and union with God the Father.

Another Syriac writing, the *Gospel of Thomas* deals with singleness within the Christian context. The *Gospel of Thomas* is a collection of sayings, or logia, attributed to Jesus which differ somewhat from the canonical sayings in emphases and spiritual sentiment.²⁷² The GT has a strong theme of

Monachisme," in *Frontiers of Human Knowledge*, ed. Torgny T. Segerstedt (Uppsala: 1978; Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1979), 219–221.

Guillaumont is not alone in this line of inquiry; A. Vööbus, R. Murray, and J. Ouellette all follow the possibility of connections between the Syriac Christians and the Qumran community. See Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, vol. 1, 100ff; Arthur Vööbus, "Aphrahat," 152–155; Robert Murray, "Characteristics of the Earliest Syriac Christianity," 3–16; and Jean Ouellette, "Aphraate, Qumran et les Qaraïtes," in *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities 15: Niddah, Commentary Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 6/15*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 166–183.

270 Syr. mind ביב' réyān, intelligence אוביב אל tar'iteh, and thought מעשבראמ maḥshabteh.

²⁷¹ D 18:11 (PS I/840.22-841.2)

²⁷² The *Gospel of Thomas*, henceforth GT, original language composition for the collection is disputed. I follow N. Perrin's analysis and suggestions that the GT was originally a Syriac text, likely produced in the area of Edessa around 175–200 C.E.

the "single one" or *ibidayē* running throughout the logia. One logion states: "Jesus said: 'Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom. For you are from it, and to it you will return."²⁷³ Salvation for humanity is a return to the unity with God that Adam enjoyed before the fall.²⁷⁴ This may be a possible witness to the early stages of solitary asceticism similar to what we find in Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*.²⁷⁵

Returning to the Sage's writings, we have the asectic singles who are to follow Christ as soldiers follow their leader. Aphrahat emphasizes this point in an elliptical analogy found in *Dem.* Seven "On Repentance."²⁷⁶ After a

Nicholas Perrin, Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 192. The GT exists in a Coptic translation found in the Nag Hammadi library. A copy of the GT Coptic manuscript is in Michael Fieger, Das Thomasevangelium Einleitung, Kommentar Und Systematik (Münster: Aschendorff, 1991), 202. See Jacques Ménard, L'évangile selon Thomas [traduction et commentaire] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975). Some English translations are Helmut Koester and Thomas O. Lambdin, "The Gospel of Thomas (II,2)," in The Nag Hammadi Library in English, vol. 3, ed. James M. Robinson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 124–138 or Richard Valantasis, The Gospel of Thomas (London: Routledge Pub., 1997).

The GT has usually been categorized as encratite, see DeConick and Fossum, "Stripped Before God," 123–150. The *Acts of Thomas*, the *Liber Graduum*, and Macarius may have used the GT as a source. For a history of the text see Klijn, "The 'Single One' in the Gospel of Thomas," 271–278; Gilles Quispel, "L'Evangile selon Thomas et les origines de l'ascese chretienne," chap. in *Aspects du Judeo-christianisme* (Paris: 1965), 35–51; and *idem*, "The Gospel of Thomas' and the 'Gospel of the Hebrews," *NTS* 12 (1966): 371–382, esp. 377.

- ²⁷³ Logion 49, Koester, "The Gospel of Thomas," 132.
- ²⁷⁴ See also Logia 4, 11, 16, 22, 23, 75, and 106. See especially Klijn, "The 'Single One' in the Gospel of Thomas" for a full discussion of this theme in the GT.
- 275 P. H. Poirier examined Aphrahat's saying about being "one" (אנגע had) by comparing this passage with the Gospel of Thomas sections 16 and 23, and observed that had and the Ihidayā are not necessarily Gnostic terms. Some terms in question are: One intellect איני ישילי ווילים וו
- ²⁷⁶ Demonstration Seven has had a fair amount of scholarly ink spilled about it, metaphorically speaking. Some scholars have argued that Demonstration Six and Seven are a unit, others have argued for the two to be considered separate texts. The issue at stake is the composition of Aphrahat's community; was it filled with only ascetics, or was it a mixed community of ascetics and non-ascetics alike? F. C. Burkitt and A. Vööbus argue for the solely ascetic community, T. Jansma and P.

discussion of Gideon and the choosing of the soldiers (Judges 7:2–8), Aphrahat writes: "For this is a great mystery, my friend, that Gideon prefigured: this is the type of baptism, the mystery of combat," and the example to the singles." Gideon is a type for Christ, with the soldiers representing the followers of Christ. It is through the sacrament of baptism that the followers of Christ may have him as their life and living example.

The martial overtones of Gideon continue throughout the demonstration; those who are dedicated to Christ are his warriors and by necessity suffer as their leader did. "The combat [agonā] is honorable for the singles because they are setting their faces forward and do not remember what is behind them."²⁷⁹ (Phil 2:13–15) One may even presume to say that the singles are the ground troops for Christ in his battle against Satan.²⁸⁰ To describe the singles' ordeal following Christ, Aphrahat uses the Greek-derived Syriac word Agonā from ἀγών which means struggle or training.²⁸¹ The term agonā is equally applicable to mental or athletic struggle and training. Aphrahat uses the word over twenty five times in three of his demonstrations: 6, 7, and 14. These three demonstrations are specifically designed to uplift his ascetic audience. Aphrahat combines the struggle imagery with that of martyrdom in *Dem.* 14:38: "You are those who run into combat, are

Bruns for a mixed community. Many other scholars weigh in on this matter, but the consensus at this point is that Aphrahat was speaking to an audience of mainly ascetics but there may have been non-ascetics present as well. A full discussion about this issue may be found in Taeke Jansma's article "Aphraates' Demonstration VII §§ 18 and 20," 21–48. A. Vööbus summarizes this controversy with the rather negative view that: "The homiletical and paraenetical language is so predominant that very little room is left for concrete data in which research is interested." (Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 3, 25). See also Francis C. Burkitt, Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire (Cambridge, 1899; reprint, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002) and Bruns, Das Christusbild Aphrahats des Persischen Weisen.

277 Syr. Kiak agonā.

אום במובן שונה מום בשונה של העת אה מוכן אם השונה הלו השל הבלוחם

²⁷⁸ D 7:19 (PS I/344.21-25) Syriac on page 67.

²⁷⁹ D 7:18 (PS I/341.23–25)

²⁸⁰ A. Guillaumont writes concerning Aphrahat's Demonstration 20:5–9 that the *ihidayē* are those who are victorious in the spiritual combat. Guillaumont, "Monachisme et Éthique Judéo-Chrétienne," 204.

²⁸¹ Payne-Smith defines *agonā* as "a trial of skill or strength, a contest, struggle. Metaph. a mental struggle, perplexity; ascetic training, the ascetic life." Payne-Smith, 3.

punished in the stadium, and receive the crowns."²⁸² The images of the Christian as athlete running a race, tortured in the Roman stadium, and then receiving the martyr's crown are common motifs throughout early Christian literature.²⁸³ Vööbus explains the term *agonā*:

It is made clear that this 'struggle' involves life without marriage and without possessions; it is a life in privation and asceticism. This then is the 'contest.' The term appears repeatedly; it became a key word in describing the true Christian life, together with the word 'struggle.' ²⁸⁴

Those who wish to be single for Christ will not have an easy or peaceful life here on earth; it will be a life full of *agonā*, or agony and struggle.

Aphrahat uses the phrase "solitary life" to define the way of behavior for the sons of the covenant and holy ones in his insistence upon men and women living separated from each other.²⁸⁵ *Ihidayē* also refers to the state of being celibate. *Dem.* 6:8 has a "Rule of Aphrahat" in which the Sage describes the standards and expectations for the single ones.²⁸⁶ Aphrahat opens his passage of commands for right behavior with "these things are suitable for singles²⁸⁷ who accept the heavenly yoke, and become disciples of Christ."²⁸⁸ The Demonstration entitled "On the Covenanters" has the rule of behavior, but it is fully applicable to all the celibates.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ D 6:8 (PS I/276.18–20)

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For a full discussion of the yoke motif in Aphrahat and in Rabbinic sources, see Naomi Koltun-Fromm, "Yokes of the Holy-Ones: The Embodiment of a Christian Vocation," *HTR* 94, 2 (2001): 207–220. She concludes that Aphrahat's

²⁸² D 14:38 (PS I/680.13–15)

²⁸⁴ Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, vol. 3, 6–7.

²⁸⁵ See the following about the *qyāmā*, page 82. Cf. D 6:4 (PS I/260.14–17).

²⁸⁶ Calling this passage the "Rule of Aphrahat" places him within the mold of St. Pachomius or St. Basil the Great's ascetic rule of life. See also, Griffith, "Singles," 150.

²⁸⁷ Syr. سنڌي i<u>h</u>idayē.

First and foremost in Aphrahat's rule is the fundamental assumption that the ascetics must remain celibate. If one is a single in the service of the Lord, then one must stay that way. To protect against temptation, celibate members should avoid cohabitating with the opposite sex. Falling prey to these temptations is tantamount to adultery because these celibate people have betrothed themselves to Christ as the Spouse. Aphrahat is very clear that he does not call sex itself sinful, his concern is that marriage distracts one from heavenly concerns with all of the earthly concerns of a wife and family.²⁹⁰ The various scriptural exemplars of the celibate life are either those who are celibate or those who should have remained celibate because, when they abandoned celibacy and turned to concerns of the world, only terrible things happened to them. These models of virtue are: Adam, Samson, David, Solomon, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, Paul, and Barnabas.²⁹¹ Aphrahat argues that Elisha had the power of God because he remained free from marital concerns. This argument has the polemical overtone of refuting the Jews who argue that being celibate is against the Abrahamic covenant: "Elisha remained solitary and chaste, and he was an amazing worker of miracles by the hand of God."292 Aphrahat warns his fellow celibates to keep temptation to a minimum (in other words, avoid women) because only evil things happen when one gives in to temptation.²⁹³ Guarding chastity and staying focused upon Christ are essen-

imagery closely parallels rabbinic usage in his focus upon Lamentations 3:27 with less emphasis upon the Levitical exhortations.

²⁸⁹ The D 6:8 (PS I/272.21) passage addresses the audience as Sons of the covenant, virgins, and saints (or holy ones).

²⁹⁰ D 18:10 (PS I/840.13–19) "And when a man takes a wife, he leaves his father and his mother ... and his mind is captivated by this world. His mind, his heart, and his reasoning are dragged away from God into the world, and he loves and enjoys it as a man loves the wife of his youth."

סבו כינים אולאים השב שבם אחבים השאלים הבו בעד האלים השבי שבם אולאים השב השר השל השל השל השל השל השל השל השל השל של השל בל השל של היושר של היושר של היושר של היושר של היושר של 291 D $_{6:3}$ and D $_{6:5}$ (PS I/256, 261–265).

²⁹² D 18:7 (PS I/833.5–7)

tial for the singles, but there are countless further requirements for these elite disciples.

Aphrahat tells these celibates to have a firm faith, fast, pray, love Christ, be mild, wise, peace-loving, pleasant, and humble. They must shun jokes, angry words, mocking, or laughter. They should refrain from drunkenness, pride, gluttony, or envy. They must dress appropriately, without jewelry, long hair with barrettes, or perfumes.²⁹⁴ They should avoid inappropriate companions, for example, those who are wicked, contemptuous, blasphemers, and slanderers.²⁹⁵ The passage in *Dem.* Six is a concise summary of the various pieces of advice about the life of an ascetic. The Singles try to function in a manner of *imitatio Christi.* Within the category of the "singles," there are further subcategories of the Covenanters, the virgins, and the holy ones.

THE COVENANTERS (BNAY QYĀMĀ)

Aphrahat is the earliest Syriac witness to the *bnay qyāmā*.²⁹⁶ This title may be variously translated as Sons of the Covenant,²⁹⁷ Covenanters,²⁹⁸ and Mem-

servations," *Hugoye Vol. 4 no. 2 (July 01)*, http://syrcom.cua.edu/syrcom/Hugoye: 2001, Paragraph 5.

²⁹⁴ Cf. D 6:8 (PS I/273–276).

²⁹⁵ Cf. D 6:8 (PS I/276.12–18).

296 Citations of the title "bnay qyāmā" are as follows: the title of the Sixth Demonstration is אנגסגלא גריים, מבלא talmvitā dbnay qyāmā. Citations not referring to the Demonstration title are: D 6:20 (PS I/312.7–21); D 7:25 (PS I/356.8); and D 10:9 (PS I/465.3). "Read and learn you the brothers (אנגי מובי ale) the sons of the covenant (בי, מברי bnay qyāmā), and the sons of our faith (בי, מברי bnay haymānutan), those from whom mocking is far removed." This passage may be interpreted as showing that the qyāmā were not clergy but lay people and still separate from the rest of the community. D 18:11 (PS I/841.13) and D 22:25 (PS I/1041.10–11) are both references to the title of D 6. Other citations of מברי qyāmā alone are far more frequent, twenty six times compared to eight times with "sons." On the whole, the term qyāmā refers to the various specific covenants of God with his people, i.e., Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the ultimate covenant, Jesus Christ.

²⁹⁷ The academic consensus at this point has preferred this title to all other possible English titles.

For various interpretations of the Covenanters see the following: Connolly, "Aphraates and Monasticism," 522–539; Burkitt, "Aphraates and Monasticism: A Reply," 10–15; Mother Mary Maude, "Who were the B'nai Q'yâmâ?," *JTS* 36 (1935): 13–21; Hausherr, "Aphraate," *DSp*, 747; Simon Jargy, "Les 'Fils et Filles du

bers of the Order.²⁹⁹ The Covenanters are a sub-set of the larger group of ascetic celibates, the singles, *ihidayē*. The nomenclature of Aphrahat's celibates is fluid and overlapping. He uses *ihidayē* and *bnay qyāmā* synonymously. As S. Griffith explains, the *ihidayē* and the *bnay qyāmā* are two terms referring to the same people in Aphrahat's community.³⁰⁰ The difference is in the point of reference in regard to them. The *ihidayē* refers to the singleness; the *bnay qyāmā* refers to standing, rising up, and community. There are celibates who are not members of the Covenant and are still singles, though the opposite is impossible: all Covenanters are *ihidayē*.

The dictionary definition of *qyāmā* is: "a) standing, upright, bearing; constitution; stability; b) a military post, station, garrison, c) a statute, covenant; d) profession of the ascetic or monastic life, vow of chastity, celibacy."³⁰¹ The most important definition is covenant.³⁰² As A. Vööbus ob-

Pacte' dans la Littérature Monastique Syriaque," OCP 17 (1951): 304–320; Vööbus, chapt. in History, vol. 1, "Qeiāmā," 97–108; idem, "The Institution of the benai qeiâmâ," 19–27; George Nedungatt, "The Covenanters of the Early Syriac Speaking Church," OCP 39 (1973): 191–215 and 419–444; Murray, "The Features of the Earliest Christian Asceticism," 63–78; idem, "Circumcision of Heart' and the Origins of the Qyāmâ," in After Bardaisan: Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Hans J. W. Drijvers, OLA vol. 89, eds. Gerrit J. Reinink and Alexander C. Klugkist (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 201–211; Griffith, "Monks, "Singles," and the "Sons of the Covenant," 141–160; Peter Nagel, "Zum Problem der Bundessöhne' bei Afrahat," Forschungen und Fortschritte 36, 5 (1962): 152–154.

²⁹⁸ This is G. Nedungatt's preferred title.

²⁹⁹ M. J. Pierre's French translation uses the phrase "des Membres de l'Ordre." Secondary sources focusing upon Aphrahat's view of the celibate or ascetic are far more numerous than on any other topic. Some key studies are the following: Gustav Bickell, Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Kirchenväter Aphraates, Rabbulas und Isaak von Ninive, zum ersten Male aus dem schriften ubersetzt (Kempten: Kösel, 1874); Guillaumont, "Monachisme et Éthique Judéo-Chrétienne," 199–218; Sebastian P. Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," in Syriac Perspective on Late Antiquity (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 1–19; Murray, "Features," 63–78; Ouellette, "Aphraate, Qumran et les Qaraïtes," 166–183; Griffith, "Singles' in God's Service," 145–159; idem, "Monks, "Singles," and the "Sons of the Covenant," 141–160; and Koltun-Fromm, "Sexuality and Holiness," 375–395.

³⁰⁰ Cf. D 22:25 (PS I/1041:11), D 8:23 (PS I/404:6), D 6:14 (PS I/296:14–16), D 18:11 (PS I/841:13), and D 6:4 (PS I/260:13–20). Griffith, "Monks, 'Singles,' and the 'Sons of the Covenant," 146.

301 Payne-Smith, 504.

³⁰² The term 'covenant' as a description of God's relationship with His people is used throughout the Hebrew scriptures, the Christian scriptures, and the Qum-

serves, for the early Syriac church, "the covenant (*qeiāmā*) assumes the structural position of moulding all its theology, ethics and organization." This term describes the people who are dedicated to Christ and the church. The followers of Christ are the Sons of the Covenant, and Christ is the Covenant. Govenant for Aphrahat and Syriac Christian thought in this way: "It is through *qyāmâ* that in this sphere of religion man's relations with God are rendered stable." Christ is the ultimate "stabilizer" in volatile times.

Qyāmā means both covenant and also literally, a standing firm; a rising up; resurrection.³⁰⁷ The Syriac root word a qām means to stand.³⁰⁸ So the Covenanters may also be translated as the sons of resurrection.³⁰⁹ There is some scholarly debate about the importance of "standing" or "rising up" to the Covenanters. Some scholars have suggested that the sense of standing up for Christ may be linked to those who stood up in the synagogues.³¹⁰ A. Vööbus, on the other hand, dismisses this aspect of the Covenanters' role in the church as far-fetched.³¹¹ But, in my opinion, there is a connection

ran documents. Covenant is *qyāmā* or ατος in Syriac, τητα in Hebrew, and διαθήκη in Greek. For a further discussion of covenant ideas see, Freedman, ed. ABD, s.v. "Covenant," by George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion; George E. Mendenhall and Johannes A. Huntjens, "Contrasting Notions of Covenant and Law in the text from Qumran," Revue de Qumran 8:3 (1974): 361–380; and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The New Covenant in the Letters of Paul and the Essene Document," in To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., eds. Maurya Horgan and Paul Kobelski (New York: Crossroads Press, 1989), 194–204.

- 303 Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 12.
- ³⁰⁴ D 16:7 (PS I/780:23, 781:9–11, 21).
- 305 Nedungatt, "Covenanters," 197.
- 306 The persecutions of Shapur II made Aphrahat's life and the life of his community very volatile.
- $^{\rm 307}$ This sentiment is very common; it can even be found in G. Webb's 1837 hymn "Stand up, stand up for Jesus."
 - ³⁰⁸ Payne-Smith, 494–495.
 - ³⁰⁹ Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria," 230–232.
- ³¹⁰ Cf. Maude, "Who were the B'nai Q'yâmâ?" 14 and Nedungatt, "Covenanters." 191–215.
 - ³¹¹ Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 98 and 100.

between those who "stand up"³¹² via the temple imagery which is so key for Aphrahat's thought. The servants of the temple normally stood in the Jerusalem temple.³¹³ There is also evidence that some of the Covenanters lived in the church building proper while they were serving the church and the community.³¹⁴ The Covenanters having to stand up in church to fulfill their sacred function is plausible, and therefore the associated meaning of stand-

³¹² Could this sentiment be akin to "standing up" for someone who is getting married, i.e., being best man or bridesmaid? This would add yet another interesting layer to the "bride of Christ" imagery for the ascetic who follows Christ.

³¹³ 1 Kings 8:10–11 is witness to standing in the temple, because the priests could not stand when the ark was installed in the temple. "And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord."

³¹⁴ Aphrahat was not the only one having to keep the Covenanters 'in line,' so to speak. Rabbula of Edessa, a fifth century bishop wrote many canons to reform the Syrian church. He was very concerned about the function, role, and abuses of the Covenanters. Some Covenanters were actually eating their dinner off of the altar. Canon #58: "The benai qeiama shall not ascend to the raised floor of the altar, and bring up any food into the apse, nor shall the priests eat there, nor shall any man eat in the church; nothing shall be placed there except sacred implements." Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, 49.

Rabbula also wrote canons to guide the treatment and behavior of both the bnay and bart qyāmā. Cf. Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Bishop Rabbula: Ascetic Tradition and Change in the Fifth Century Edessa" unpublished manuscript, 1996; Peter Bruns, "Bischof Rabbula von Edessa—Dichter und Theologe," Symposium Syriacum VII, OCA vol. 256, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pont. Istituto Orientale, 1998), 195–202; Hans J. W. Drijvers, "The Man of God of Edessa, Bishop Rabbula, and the Urban Poor," in Media Latinitas: A collection of essays to mark the occasion of the retirement of L. J. Engels, ed. R. I. A. Nip (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1996), 205–210; idem, "Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa: Spiritual Authority and Secular Power," in Portraits of Spiritual Authority, eds. Hans J. W. Drijvers and J. W. Watt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 139–154.

ing is significant.³¹⁵ Those who stand up for the divine are included in the human and the angelic realms in the *Demonstrations*.

In *Dem.* Six, Aphrahat declares that: "Whoever partakes in the likeness of angels, let him become a stranger to men." The angels are the ones who watch and stand continually; the Covenanters are called to be eternally standing and watching. The most comprehensive definition is the most accurate, thus, the phrase "Sons of the Covenant" includes all aspects of covenant, treaty, promise, and bond, coupled with the angelic and mystical temple imagery of watching, standing, resurrection, and serving.

The role and function of the Covenanters within the early Syriac church is difficult to define, but various scholars have attempted to do so. S. Griffith portrays the Covenanters as "...a group of celibates belonging to a certain station in life in the community that in the early period of the history of the church in the Syriac speaking world they assumed by covenant, or solemn pledge, at baptism." The pledge at baptism of dedication to Christ through chastity and right action is key for these ascetics. They were role models for all Christians who should stand and watch for the second coming of Christ. "[The *qyāmā* are] Christians who sought to make a reality here already on earth of this potential to re-enter Paradise which was conferred upon them at their baptism." Rather than leaving the city or community, these men and women worked to fulfill the ideal of asceticism within the world, not removed from it.

A Covenanter was a bridge between heaven and earth through baptism and being made a divine temple. A. Vööbus defines the Covenanters as

³¹⁵ Aphrahat describes the liturgy in the "Church of God," presumably his own parish, where he describes the eucharist in the same imagery as the Passover. So "they [the Christians] eat the lamb [the Eucharist] quickly in trembling and fear while standing on their feet, because they hasten to eat life from the spiritual gift that they have received." D 12:9 (PS I/528. 17–21)

ومانه مراك المعروب عن المحامل المادي المراكب من المحامد المادي المحامد المحامد المحامد المحامد المحامد المحامد المحامد المحامة المحامد المحام

 $^{^{316}\,\}mathrm{D}$ 6:1 (PS I/248.25–26) See also Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 16.

אבים האסמי האים ביג, איבים האסמי האים איבים ביג איבים האסמי איבים ביג איבים ביג איבים ביג איבים ביג איבים ביג איבים איב

³¹⁸ Griffith, "Asceticism," 238.

³¹⁹ Brock, Syriac Fathers on Prayer, xxiv.

those who transcend mundane concerns for the divine. His description is that: "all the *qeiāmā* of male and female were abstinent and glorious, and they were holy and pure and dwelt singly and abstinently without defilement, in watchfulness of the service gloriously."³²⁰ The angelic overtones of the Covenanter's function suggest that they had origins within the Jewish mystic milieu. This connection is only alluded to by G. Kittel in a very brief article in which he cites a 19th century manuscript which says that there are are honey dyame in the synagogue. He notes that the parallel between the Christian church and synagogue is interesting. ³²¹ Sadly, there has been very little scholarly interest in tracing this connection further in the later Jewish synagogue tradition, and it is beyond this study to do so here. To recapitulate, the Sons of the Covenant are dedicated to Christ at the time of baptism, celibate, models for the Christian life, imitators of the angelic life, and divine temples.

The Covenanters were a distinct group who could be identified and singled out from the rest of the clergy and church membership. During the persecutions of the Persian Emperor, Shapur II, the Covenanters were persecuted and harassed. In the form of an intercession to God to save them from the terrible situation, Aphrahat writes:

Have compassion for your people plundered, for your house destroyed, for your altars pulled down, for your priests slaughtered, for your Covenant persecuted, for your scriptures which are sealed [away], for us dispersed and for us plundered.³²²

It was probably around 340 C.E. when the first Christians were killed in this persecution, which lasted sporadically for about a half century. This passage

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³²⁰ Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 11.

³²¹ Gerhard Kittel, "Eine synagogale Parallel zu den *Benai Qejama*," *ZNTW* 16 (1915): 235–236.

³²² D 23:53 (PS II/105.21–27)

Later in the same Demonstration, Aphrahat writes that "our covenant is dispersed." (D 23:55 PS II/112.6) and "Have regard, Lord, have regard for the purity of your covenant which has fallen into the hands of evil." (D 23:56 PS II/113.24–26)

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suggests that the Covenanters were able to be identified for persecution, as were the priests. They must have had distinctive clothing and position within the church.

Aphrahat is not alone in describing the ascetic followers of Jesus within his community. The *Liber Graduum*, likely an early mid fourth to the early fifth century C.E. Syriac text, describes two distinct groups of Christians—the Just and the Perfect.³²³ The people who are the Just (Kené) are those who are married and are active in ministering on earth.³²⁴ The Perfect (Kirch gmiré) are those who are single,³²⁵ like the angels,³²⁶ pray, and wander from town to town.³²⁷ The LG explains why the Just are less than the Perfect:

Because, therefore, the Just ones have not withdrawn from all that there is on earth, nor from marriage and anxiety and labor, they eat from that tree from which Adam ate and they have many faults [keeping] them from perfection. But our Lord wished through his mercies to give to them [the chance] to observe justness, which is lower than perfection,

³²³ Brock, Syriac Fathers on Prayer, 42–53.

³²⁴ R. Kitchen prefers to translate the *kenē* as "the Upright" because English usage of "just" causes some confusion. Kitchen, *The Book of Steps*, ii. For our purposes, "just" is traditional and sufficient.

³²⁵ Mēmrē 30 is entitled "On the commandments of faith and the love of the Ihidayē (solitaries دينتانيي). Ihidayē is a defining state for both the LG and Aphrahat: those who are single follow Jesus who is the ultimate Single one. For further discussion, see page 73.

³²⁶ Cf. LG 25:8 c.752:1–4 "For the Perfect are like angels, as our Lord said, "Those who are worthy of that resurrection are not able to die, but are like the angels."" (Luke 20:35–36)

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³²⁷ Kitchen states that: "Distinct from the image of the cloistered monk or even the solitary hermit, the Perfect did not take a vow of stability. Wandering in the region with no permanent domicile (365:26–368:2; 505:16–19), they taught all manner of people (61:10–14; 893:7–13), begged (529:10–12), and mediated disputes in other churches and communities (37:9–14; 93:24–96:2)." Robert Kitchen, "Conflict on the Stairway to Heaven: The Anonymity of Perfection in the Syriac Liber Graduum," in *Symposium Syriacum VII*, 1996. OCA Vol. 256, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998), 213–214.

so that when they marry and are in these visible things they will be beautiful in the day of our Lord. 328

A. Guillaumont suggests that the Perfect of the LG are the equivalent of the *bnay qyāmā* with whom Aphrahat is very well acquainted.³²⁹ This equivalency is inaccurate since the *qyāmā* for the most part were living and serving a stable community and intransient, unlike the LG's perfect ones who wandered from town to town. The spiritual foci of both the LG's perfect ones and the *qyāmā* of Aphrahat's writings are quite similar, but the lived experiences of both groups are different. However, the distinctions between the Just and the Perfect of the LG are applicable also to the spiritual journey of becoming a temple of God. The Just stay within the visible church and if they are extraordinary, they may progress to becoming a human temple, but it is less likely. The Perfect are able to become the temple of God in the body and the heart and are likely to progress to the heavenly temple. As the LG explains:

Whoever reaches in his heart to that heavenly church and soon departs, he is blessed in his spirit so that he becomes perfect and he will go see our Lord face to face. ³³⁰

One of the many reasons for the difference between the Just and the Perfect comes from the different degrees to which the Spirit dwells in different people.³³¹ Aphrahat has a similar idea that the Holy Spirit may leave a per-

³²⁸ LG 20:6 c. 541:20-544:6

³²⁹ Antoine Guillaumont, "Situation et signification du 'Liber Graduum' dans la spiritualité syriaque," in *Symposium Syriacum 1972*. OCA Vol. 197, (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 1974), 314.

³³⁰ The passage continues with a defense of the visible church and the importance of the sacraments. LG 12:4 c.296.4–8

הבן הכלה כלבת לה, בנולה הכשביה הכן בנה: להכנת להמנח: המהא במניא האול עוא למיך אפים להמבל אפים.

Aphrahat has a similar progression of perfection in Demonstration 1:3, page 30.

³³¹ See for example, LG 28:1 c.788:13–17 "For whenever Adam and his children sin, this breath which is the Spirit of God turns aside from them, and when

son if the person commits a grievous enough sin.³³² Though both texts use temple as an essential image, the *Liber* describes the process and uses the image with more explanation than does Aphrahat. The Sage presents the temple image with the accompanying scriptural references and assumes that his audience can fill in the blanks. The LG author does not leave anything to the interpretation of his audience. He explains in clear and simple terms the role of the visible church as a means to create the personal temple of God.

The Covenanters in the *Demonstrations* are a distinct group of male celibate ascetics who are usually lay people and may have been formerly married. This group serves the physical church or temple as well as becoming living temples of the Spirit. The *Liber Graduum* also describes his ascetic community, the Just and the Perfect, in terms of temple imagery. The LG author uses the degree to which an adherent is a temple as a delineation point between the two groups. Although there are key differences between the LG's ascetic community and that as described in the Sage's area, the fundamentals are the same—followers of Jesus may be celibate ascetics who eventually become spiritual temples. A question arises though, are the celibate ascetics necessarily male and not female in Aphrahat's view?

HOLY WOMEN

Despite the masculine collective phrase "Sons of the Covenant," there were also females who were dedicated to Christ and fulfilled a very similar role to their male counterparts.³³³ Aphrahat rarely uses the term *bart qyāmā* or the

they repent, God comes and dwells in each of them in like manner, to the measure of his gifts of Christ, [who gives] different gifts."

הלך ובך אכיני ניילא אינל פידומים, משניא דע מנינים שי הפיניתא ואינים וסימ ואדע האומי מאכיני ונייבי אניי בכוא בשים ברוא אבטנים: איא בידא ומבשכנים ומשייא: מטשב מבשב : מבשב :

³³² Cf. D 6:1 (PS/I 252.9–12) and the section entitled "Grieving the Spirit," page 122.

³³³ For a study of female ascetics and the reworking of societal norms into the Christian ascetic milieux, see Susan Ashbrook Harvey's article "Sacred Bonding: Mothers and Daughters in Early Syriac Hagiography," *JECS* 4, 1 (1996): 27–56. The *bart qyāmā* are women who live within the larger community rather than being isolated from it. Harvey reassesses the role of the *bart qyāmā*, suggesting that their liturgical role as singers in the choirs of church (thereby teaching the congregation within a public and civic context) is more important to their function than modern

daughters of the Covenant; he prefers to use the masculine plural for both male and female members of the order.³³⁴ Aphrahat uses "virgins" instead of *bart qyāmā* when discussing an issue of domestic polity. The male covenanters were pressuring their female counterparts to keep house for them.³³⁵ Aphrahat warns: "O you virgins who have betrothed yourselves to Christ, when one from the sons of the covenant says to you…"³³⁶ N. Koltun-Fromm suggests that Aphrahat's view of daughters of the covenant is rather negative; she argues that Aphrahat does not allow for formerly married women to become Covenanters. She writes that: "Their virginity simply elevates them from the level of 'Daughters of Eve' but it does not bring them to holiness, *kadishuta* [as the men are]."³³⁷ In my opinion, when Aphrahat exhorts the Sons of the Covenant to better behavior, it is equally applicable to the devout women who follow Christ.

Aphrahat's pedagogical goals of edifying his presumably male ascetic community overwhelm any great concerns about holy women. Does this mean that Aphrahat thinks that women cannot be temples of God? I do

scholarship has recognized. Aphrahat does not mention this liturgical function, but he is witness to the public presence of the female Covenanters. See Susan A. Harvey, "Revisiting the Daughters of the Covenant" read at the North American Syriac Symposium IV, July 9th, 2003, Princeton, NJ. According to J. E. Goehring, there is evidence of Christian Egyptian women in the early fourth century being active in the community rather than being isolated from it. "Didyme and the sisters' participated in various commercial transactions that include lines of credit and transfer of goods (grapes, sandals, cakes, a head-band, and an ostrich egg)." Goehring continues stating that it is not clear that their organization is a monastery in the modern sense, but "it does appear to fit an earlier form of Christian ascetic association in which flight from the world was not primary." James E. Goehring, "The Origins of Monasticism," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, eds. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 243. See also Simon Jargy's discussion of the daughters of the covenant in Jargy, "Les "Fils et Filles du Pacte," 315–320.

334 D 6:4 (PS I/260.15) בוא היא בוא attā bart qyāmā is used only once in all the Demonstrations.

³³⁵ The issue of male and female ascetics cohabitating is an important one for Aphrahat. See below, the section entitled "Marriage and Virginity," page 99.
³³⁶ D 6:7 (PS I/272.1–3)

אם באם לא האמבו, נפימן למינוא בו עו מן כו, מערא נאמל לעה מורא מובין:

³³⁷ D 6:6 (PS I/269.10–12) is then cited. N. Koltun-Fromm, "Sexuality and Holiness," 378 note 8 and N. Koltun-Fromm, "Yokes of the Holy-Ones," 213.

not think so. Aphrahat does not wholly ignore the women in his larger audience. He notes examples of the female sages of the Hebrew scriptures, and he mentions the female ascetics of his community occasionally. He refers to women sporadically in a slightly positive light; these are primarily examples of women from the scriptures, mentioned in a cursory manner without any in-depth analysis of female soteriology. Women can be sages by bringing peace to those around them. In *Dem.* 14:11, Aphrahat cites various Hebrew scriptural examples of wise women. For example, the Teqo woman reconciling Absalom and David, Deborah, Yael, the wife of Heber; and finally Rebecca.³³⁸ In general, women are passed over in his works. The most extensive discussion of women is in *Dem.* 6:2–5, written likely eight years earlier than *Dem.* Fourteen,³³⁹ where Aphrahat tells in great detail about all the instances in the scriptures when women were the downfall of holy men. As he writes:

Therefore, brothers, we know and have seen that from the beginning it was through a woman that the Enemy had an access to men and until the end he will accomplish this. For she is the weapon of Satan, and through her he fights against the athletes. [...] For because of her, the curse of the Law was established, and it was because of her there was the promise of death. For in pain she bears sons and delivers [them] to death. [...] So now, by the coming of the child of the blessed Mary, [...] paradise is promised to the blessed and the virgins and the holy ones.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ D 14:11 (PS I/596). The scriptural references are: 2 Sam 14:1–24 and 20:16–20; Judges 4:17–21 and 20:20, and Gen 27:43–46.

³³⁹ A. Lehto suggests that Aphrahat is more positively disposed towards women in Demonstration 14 than in Demonstration 6 possibly because "certain women were performing these roles in Aphrahat's community in a way that caught his attention in the time period between the writing of the two *Demonstrations*." This is a speculation on Lehto's part, but it is an interesting and compelling thought. Lehto, "Women in Aphrahat," paragraph 11.

³⁴⁰ D 6:6 (PS I/265.3–8, 10–13, 15–16, 20–21)

This is less than encouraging concerning women becoming temples of God since they are the "weapon of Satan" against the male ascetic. The parallel of Eve and Mary is prominent in the passage: Eve brought the Law, painful childbirth, and death which is overcome by Mary's Son. Furthermore, Eve was the one who first allowed Satan to conquer Adam; then, through Mary, Jesus is ultimately able to conquer Satan. Aphrahat is writing particularly to his male ascetic audience, the spiritual athletes for whom women are a temptation and problem. If one wishes to stretch interpreting this passage, then a far less probable interpretation is that Aphrahat thinks that women must become men to enter heaven. Because it is the men who will enter paradise, Aphrahat uses the male terms for blessed, virgins, and holy ones, not female.³⁴¹ The idea of women becoming men to be saved is a fairly common sentiment from his era; androgyny was deemed necessary for female sanctification.³⁴² Another possible interpretation is impossible to

See also D 18:9 (PS I/837). Women also bring nothing but grief to those men who give up their virginity for them. There are very few references to Mary called "the mother of the great prophet" in D 14:33 (PS I/657), or "Blessed Mary who bore Him" D 6:10 (PS I/281); and in D 3:14 (PS I/132) and D 21:10 (PS I/960). Mary is cited within passages where Aphrahat discusses the role of Gabriel as one who takes prayer up to heaven. In D 9:5, Mary is an example of humility because she conceived Jesus through her humility. If one agrees with A. Lehto's assessment of Mary and her importance as a counterpoint to Eve in Aphrahat's work, then Mary has an important role in salvation history. Lehto, "Women in Aphrahat," paragraph 8.

341 The terms are: the blessed منته (tubnē), the virgins مدقة (btulē), and the holy ones مدتة (qaddishē).

³⁴² The idea of female followers having to act or become like males is found in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, where Thecla "sewed her mantle into a cloak after the fashion of men," to follow Paul. *Acts of Paul*, c.40. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Acts of Paul," in *New Testament Apocrypha Vol. 2*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson (London: James Clarke & Co, 1992; reprint Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 246. The androgyn motif may come from a possible interpretation of Paul's letter to the Galatians 3:28. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Logion 114 of the *Gospel of Thomas* also has the androgyn motif clearly stated: "Simon Peter said to them, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said: 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven." Koester, "The Gospel of Thomas (II,2)," 138.

prove, but may be most compassionate to Aphrahat himself; he does not address whether or not women may become temples of God because he is primarily concerned about his own companions, all of whom are probably male. So holy women are not unknown to Aphrahat, but they are not center stage, nor maybe even in the theatre. Aphrahat's lack of literary interest in women stands in stark contrast to his contemporary Ephrem the Syrian.

In the area of writing about women and the holy life, Ephrem trumps Aphrahat in almost every way. A key difference between Aphrahat's and Ephrem's various uses for the term "temple" is that the latter applies the term to Mary, the mother of God. Aphrahat has very little to say about Mary and he never uses the temple symbolism in reference to her. Ephrem writes in the *Hymn on the Nativity*, no. 17 describing Mary and Jesus: "Blessed is she, You are in her heart and mind. She is a royal palace, 343 because of You, the King's Son. She is the holy of holies for You, the High Priest." Mary's title of palace, or temple, is dependent upon her relationship with Jesus who makes her the temple. The liturgical imagery of Mary as the holy place and Jesus as the high priest fills out the palace imagery since *hayklā* can mean both palace and temple. Ephrem has great sympathy and regard for Mary and for women in general, while Aphrahat seems to view women primarily as a threat to the purity of his male ascetics.

In regard to women being temples, Ephrem has a unique use of this image: he uses the term "temples" solely to refer to female virgin ascetics, never to males. In his *Hymn on the Epiphany*, XI, Ephrem writes:

There are further examples of females becoming like men and even surpassing gender distinction in the sayings of the Egyptian Desert Fathers. S. Elm argues that the transformation of holy women into holy men is beyond a temporary vision transformation or even an analogy but becomes a physical reality for those women who fight with demons and suffer in the desert. These women become 'fathers' and 'athletes' of the desert. See Susanna Elm, 'Virgins of God' The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 269.

³⁴³ Syr. **birt**.

³⁴⁴ Hymn on the Nativity, 17.5. Edmund Beck, ed., Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphiania): Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers CSCO#186 vol. 82. (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1959), 88. See Sebastian P. Brock, Bride of Light, Moran 'Etho (Kottayam, India: SEERI, 1994), 25.

لمحدث لعديم بعدة حلحق واحدة والمعالم بعد من وا خلكم من حمد وا خلكم معددة معالم عددة المعالم ا

Give praise, O daughter, that the perfecting of your temples and sons has increased. See now, rejoice that your temples are renewed through worship and your sons are renewed through anointing.³⁴⁵

Throughout his *Hymns on Virginity*, Ephrem uses the term temple for the female virgins.³⁴⁶ This use may well stem from the idea that Mary was the temple for Christ, so too the female virginal followers of Christ are the temples. The male followers are acknowledged, but they are usually called something other than "virgins" or "temples."

Ephrem and Aphrahat share a common language, ancestry, and faith; however, they differ on the topic of women in the church. Ephrem is the poet who extols Mary as the temple for the Christ, Aphrahat is mute on the subject. Ephrem even goes so far as to call female ascetics temples, Aphrahat never extends such a courtesy to the *bnat qyama*, or female covenanters, in his writings. Aphrahat's primary concern is the male Covenanter, not his female equivalent. There are also two other categories of ascetics that Aphrahat discusses: the first are the virgins (*btulè*), and the second are the holy ones (*qaddishè*).

THE VIRGINS (BTULĒ)

The virgins are the most easily defined of Aphrahat's celibate community groups. They are the ultimate celibates. Aphrahat proclaims that: "Whoever desires virginity, let him resemble Elijah." The virgins are a sub group within the larger group of the singles. They are complements to the holy ones—married people who are now celibate. The issue of virginity is so important for Aphrahat that he writes a whole Demonstration dealing with its polemical ramifications. *Dem.* Eighteen, entitled "Against the Jews and

³⁴⁶ See *Hymn on Virginity*, 24.1 and 25.10–11. Beck, *de Virginitate*, 84, 91. See also Louis Leloir, "La Pensée Monastique d'Éphrem et Martyrius," *Symposium Syriacum 1972*, OCA 197, 105–134 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 1974), 105–134.

³⁴⁸ See Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 69–84, and 103–105 and S. AbouZayd, "Virginity in Aphrahat," Symposium Syriacum V, 1988, OCA vol. 236, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1990), 123–133.

on Virginity and Holiness" defends the Christian faith against accusations from Jewish opponents.³⁴⁹ Virginity and holiness are indivisible for the Sage.

Aphrahat's thesis is that virginity is better than any other state of human existence, and he defends his position with various scriptural proof texts from both the Hebrew scriptures and the Gospels. Noah is one of the many exemplars mentioned by Aphrahat to illustrate the importance of virginity. Noah as the paradigm of fidelity to God became a typically Christian statement. N. K. Fromm suggests that: "For Aphrahat, it is virginity, not faith, that appears as the real criterion for Noah's righteousness." Aphrahat also argues that Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and Adam before Eve's creation are all models for his audiences' lives. Hentions of virgins and virginity are scattered throughout his works; for the most part the terms are simple descriptions of the chaste ascetics both in Aphrahat's community and in scriptures.

One of the more popular scriptural proof texts for virginity is the parable of the wise virgins, Matt 25:13 and parallels. Some scholars who have studied the treatment of this parable within Syriac Christian literature have noted a clear similarity between Aphrahat and Ephrem. K. Valavanolickal even suggests that there may be a direct borrowing between the two authors.³⁵³ The last sentence of the wise virgins parable is key: Matt 25:13

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D 18 is available in English translation in Neusner's work, Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism*, 76–96.

³⁵⁰ Naomi Koltun-Fromm, "Aphrahat and the Rabbis on Noah's Righteousness in Light of the Jewish-Christian Polemic," in *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation*, eds. Judith Frishman and Lucas Van Rompay (Louvain: E. J. Peeters., 1997), 59. Cf. D 18:2–3 (PS I/819–824). Noah, in Aphrahat's understanding, was 500 years old before he had his children. So Noah remained celibate for 500 years in order to not have children who were corrupted by the evil generation—see Gen 5:32 ff.

³⁵¹ Cf. D 18:7-8 (PS I/832, 833, 837)

³⁵² ເວັດ ສັດ ຄົນໄດ້ເລັ້າ, the virgins is found in D 6:4, 6, 7 (PS I/261.5, 269.7, 272.1–18); D 7:20 (PS I/345.10); D 8:21–22 (PS I/401.6–23); D 10:6 (PS I/457.14); D 14:16, 37, 47 (PS I/613.6–18, 677.2, 717.22); D 22:7 (PS I/1004.20). ເປັນ btulutā or virginity is found in Demonstrations other than D 18 as follows: D 1:4 (PS I/12:15); D 6:1, 5, 19, 20 (PS I/253.10, 264.24, 309.22, 312.8); D 7:20 (PS I/345.9); D 22:25 (PS I/1044.2–3).

³⁵³ Kuriakose A. Valavanolickal, *The use of the Gospel parables in the writings of Aphrahat and Ephrem* (Frankfurt an Main; New York: P. Lang, 1996), 353. He sug-

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." From this passage it is a rather simple leap to relate the wise virgins to the holy angelic watchers. Therefore, if one wishes to follow Christ, one should be virginal, ever vigilant, and watchful, following the example of the angels.

Aphrahat often tells his audience to follow the *vita angelica* for salvation. The two different terms for the heavenly ministers at the Lord's throne who function as examples for humans are: angels (malākē) and watchers (rirē). 354 Aphrahat uses the terms interchangeably with no marked difference between the terms concerning characteristics or roles of these heavenly beings. The only difference between the two terms is the frequency of use: watchers or heavenly watchers occurs a total of thirteen times, angels occurs approximately thirty-six times. Both terms happen most frequently in direct quotations from the scriptures.

Some pertinent instances from the various references to angels are *Dem.* 20:11, *Dem.* 2:20, and *Dem.* 6:1. In *Dem.* 20:11, Aphrahat weaves together John 1:51 and 20:13, Matt 4:11 and 26:53, and Luke 2:14, within a very short space to explain the passage about Lazarus and the rich man. The angels' responsibilities are wide ranging, from those who carry Lazarus into the bosom of Abraham (meaning heaven), to those who declare the resurrection of Jesus to Mary, serve Jesus, glorify him at his birth, announce his birth to Mary, and finally are present when the Son of Man will come again. Following Matt 18:10, Aphrahat writes in *Dem.* 2:20 that: "He said and declared about the little ones, that no one should despise them because their angels³⁵⁵ are always seen by the Father who is in heaven." The angels of the same always seen by the Father who is in heaven.

gests that this parable may be a common exegetical topi or it may be fairly clear borrowing. Ephrem's texts are *Hymn on the Resurrection* XLVI:37:41 and *Hymn on the Nativity* 21:4. See also Pieter J. Botha, "A comparison between Aphrahat and Ephrem on the subject of Passover," *Acta Patristica et Byzantina*, 3 (1992): 46–62.

³⁵⁴ Aphrahat uses the term angels (حلات malākē) in the following: D 2:20 (PS I/93:20–23), D 6:1 (PS I/248.25–26), D 8:16 (PS I/392.21), D 20:9–11 (PS I/908.6–912.12), D 20:17 (PS I/924–925), D 22:13 (PS I/1016.27), D 22:15–16 (PS I/1024–1025), and D 23:4 (PS II/13.25).

The term watchers (**~iii**) occurs in: D 5:3 (PS I/188.13), D 5:22 (PS I/228.8–22), D 6:5 (PS I/264.7–8), D 6:6 (PS I/268.12–13), D 6:6 (PS I/268.26–269.1), D 6:14 (PS I/296.18–19), D 6:19 (PS I/309.21–24), D 14:31 (PS I/653.7–11), D 14:35 (PS I/664.2–3), and D 18:12 (PS I/841.25).

³⁵⁵ Syr. analākāyhon.

³⁵⁶ D 2:20 (PS I/93:20–23)

gels function both as continual worshippers of God the Father and as juvenile welfare officers about the people who may be mistreating children. In *Dem.* 6:1, the ascetics are directly exhorted to imitate the angels: "Whoever partakes in the likeness of angels, let him become a stranger to men." The angels or heavenly messengers are to be life examples for those who wish to follow this path of asceticism and celibacy.

The second term Aphrahat uses for angels is "watchers" (rin). The term watchers is also found in Daniel 4:13, Gen 6:1–4, and in the Second Temple text expansions of Genesis and 1 Enoch 15.358 Aphrahat's use of the term suggests that he may have been familiar with these texts or at least with their terminology from the biblical texts.359 The most frequent use of "watcher" or "heavenly watcher" is in allusions to the Hebrew scriptures where angels have a prominent role. Aphrahat uses both watcher and angel interchangeably when referring to 1 Kings 19:15–35, the story of Hezekiah's prayer causing the death of 185,000 people. The heavenly beings who do the killing are called angels (malake) in Dem. 4:8 (PS I/153.10); the beings are called watchers (ine) in Dem. 5:3 (PS I/188.13) describing the same story. The term watcher also refers to those who serve the heavenly throne and in descriptions of the end times.360

The celibate followers of Christ are described as "watchers" as well. The watchers are characterized as spiritual, heavenly, and virginal; so too should the individuals within the community strive to be. As Aphrahat declares in *Dem.* 6:19: "In writing this, I have reminded myself and you, my friend. Therefore love virginity, the heavenly portion, the communion of

³⁵⁷ D 6:1 (PS I/248.25–26) See above, page 96.

³⁵⁸ For a discussion of Noah and the Watchers, see John C. Endres, "Prayer of Noah: Jubilees 10:3–6," in *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Mark Kiley (London: Routledge, 1997), 53–58.

³⁵⁹ Alexander Golitzin, "The Place of the Presence of God," 400.

 $^{^{360}}$ D 6:6 (PS I/268.12–13) "The heavenly Watchers will rush, and the throne shall be set for right judgement."

D 6:14 (PS I/296.18–19) "When the Watchers have opened the doors of heaven before the king..."

D 14:35 (PS I/664.2–3) "The Watchers hasten to serve [the sage] and the Seraphs cry 'holy' to his glory." For the Syriac of this quotation see page 140.

the heavenly Watchers, there is nothing that compares to it."³⁶¹ Being as the angels and virginal is the best way of living and following Christ. Aphrahat further suggests that because they are followers of Christ, they will be able to be companions with the heavenly watchers, and the angels will even become their personal servants.

And those who are made partakers with him, and do works of reconciliation and peace, become his brothers and sons of God. They inherit the Kingdom, they minister, and they are ministered to by the heavenly Watchers.³⁶²

He makes his position on celibacy very clear with his advice to the Covenanters: "For those who do not take wives will be ministered to by the heavenly Watchers." One of Aphrahat's interests in the angels is that they are virginal. This dovetails with one of his many polemical agendas: that is, that virginity is the ideal state of being.

MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY

Aphrahat's declaration concerning virginity and marriage succinctly summarizes the situation as he sees it: "The Son created marriage, worldly procreation, and it is very good (Gen. 1:31); however, virginity is more excellent." Paul's position on the matter of marriage and celibacy as articulated in 1 Corinthians 7:8–9 is the norm from which Aphrahat works. Despite this fairly obvious biblical basis for Aphrahat's position on the matter, the apparent tension within his texts between married and virginal life has vexed some scholars. A. Vööbus suggests that Aphrahat is witness to

³⁶¹ D 6:19 (PS I/309.21–24)

ملے حلفلہ عمدال للعب مهد لب سوئور حدال ناسم دلمالملا ملائے عدم بعشم لمن عدیم الله کنا مدید الفیم الله عدیم الله کا 14:31 (PS I/653.7–11)

مونه عملامه مرايه العلم والور عورنه: ومرايه مرس دره المراهمة

³⁶⁵ Cf. Koltun-Fromm, "Sexuality and Holiness," 385–387; Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows," 21–79; Murray, "The Features of the

some archaic concept of the Syriac church that held: "Virginity would be normal for Christians." ³⁶⁶ If this was not actually the case within Aphrahat's community, it was at least the standard to which Aphrahat wished all would strive. In my opinion, Vööbus rather overstates the virginity issue in saying that:

All the available sources are unanimous in their testimony that the fundamental conception around which the Christian belief centered was the doctrine that the Christian life is unthinkable outside the bounds of virginity.³⁶⁷

Vööbus then focuses upon what he characterizes as Aphrahat's: "estimate of marriage and its totally negative character." ³⁶⁸

Marriage as "distracting" from God is certainly one of Aphrahat's opinions, but it must be balanced with his other statements about marriage. When one takes into account Aphrahat's own statement about marriage being good, his declared audience (predominantly ascetics), and his own polemical goals (refuting his Jewish antagonist) it is hardly convincing that, according to Aphrahat, the only way to live a Christian life is through virginity. Vööbus' position sounds hauntingly similar to a much earlier statement by F. C. Burkitt who concludes that there is no reference to the sacramental ceremony of marriage, and therefore: "We cannot doubt that he [Aphrahat] would have regarded such a ceremony [as marriage] with horror."369 Such a characterization is inaccurate and disingenuous. Aphrahat had certain goals of pedagogy to fulfill with his texts, and he also had a certain purpose in mind—training his ascetics to be better followers of Christ. The married laity were not a primary concern for Aphrahat, but he did not think that marriage was evil. It is apparent that Aphrahat's principal concern is for his celibate audience; however, he writes about married Christians:

God forbid that we should attribute any fault to marriage which God has given to the world, because thus it is written, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."³⁷⁰ However, there are some things

Earliest Christian Asceticism," 63–78, and Neusner, "Aphrahat on Celibacy," 117–129.

³⁶⁶ Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 175.

³⁶⁷ Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 69.

³⁶⁸ Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 3, 21 is quoting D 18:10 (PS I/840).

³⁶⁹ Burkitt, Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire, 53–54.

³⁷⁰ Gen 1:31.

which are more excellent than others. God created heaven and earth, and they are very good, and heaven is more excellent than the earth.³⁷¹

Aphrahat does not suggest that marriage is the ideal state for Christians, but neither is it abhorrent to God.³⁷² Marriage imagery describes the virgin's state at baptism. The person is engaged to Christ the Bridegroom, and the marriage will be celebrated at the end times.³⁷³ Aphrahat's view of marriage is far from negative; everyone is or will get married in the end. The virgins and singles will be married to Christ, to be celebrated at the heavenly wedding feast; and the other Christians are married to partners here on earth and then later can be married to Christ.

Aphrahat's wholly negative injunctions against marriage are limited to those who may be classified as participating in "spiritual marriages." This is a type of marriage whereby two continent people of the opposite sex choose to or continue to reside together. This is a possible threat to their respective vows of celibacy. Aphrahat takes the Pauline position in *Dem.* 6:4 that it is better to marry openly than break the vow of chastity.

³⁷¹ D 18:8 (PS I/836.20–27)

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³⁷³ See further discussion about the Sons of the Covenant as betrothed to Christ in D 9:4 (PS I/ 414.23–416.6). Cf. Brock, *Syriac Fathers on Prayer*, xxv and Geo Widengren, "Réflexions sur le baptême dans la chrétienté syriaque," chap. in *Mélanges M. Simon: Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1978), 347–357.

Therefore, brothers, if any man who is a son of the covenant³⁷⁴ or a holy one,³⁷⁵ who loves singleness,³⁷⁶ but wishes that a woman, a daughter of the covenant³⁷⁷ like himself, should live with him, it would be [more] appropriate for him to take a wife publicly and not be ravished by lust.³⁷⁸

Rabbula, a Syrian Bishop of the fifth century, also legislates against these spiritual marriages.³⁷⁹ We can infer that spiritual marriages were a fairly common occurrence and very threatening to the community, since fully a century after Aphrahat's time, a bishop was still trying to correct the same problem.³⁸⁰ Aphrahat advises the neophyte celibates that it is better to marry now than to sin later. In *Dem.* Seven, he interprets the Gideon warrior passage (Judges 7:2–8) in terms of spiritual battle and the possibility of an ascetic falling from the wounds of sin.

So, for this reason it is suitable for the trumpet blowers, the preachers of the Church, to call out to them and caution them all on the covenant of God before baptism, those who have devoted themselves to virginity³⁸¹ and holiness,³⁸² the young men and virgins and holy ones, and let the preachers caution them and say to them: "He whose heart is set on

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³⁷⁹ Rabbula's canon #28 "They shall anathematize, bind and send to the town for judgment the layman who dares to take a *bart qeiama* (as a wife); if she, too, became corrupted by her consent, they shall send her, too." Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, 43.

³⁸⁰ The Syrian fathers are not the only Christian leaders who were fighting against "spiritual marriages," it is a common pastoral problem addressed by many different church leaders in the early church including Jerome and John Chrysostom. See Elm, '*Virgins of God*,' 47–51, and Antoine Guillaumont, "Le Nom des 'Agapètes," *VC* 23 (1969): 30–37.

³⁷⁴ Syr. معد *qyāmā*.

³⁷⁵ Syr. Krin gaddishā.

³⁷⁶ Syr. كامنين i<u>h</u>idayutā.

³⁷⁷ Syr. معد bart qyāmā.

³⁷⁸ D 6:4 (PS I/260.13–17)

³⁸¹ Syr. べかへんのみコ btulutā

³⁸² Syr. Kharin gaddishutā.

the state of marriage, let him marry before baptism, that he not fall in the struggle³⁸³ and be killed."³⁸⁴

It is disastrous for the person and the community when an ascetic is no longer celibate and breaks the pledge of dedication to God. It is better for the person to openly marry; then, after having a family, there is still the option of continence later in life. Aphrahat's pastoral concern is to exhort constant celibacy amongst his Covenanters and virgins. He also speaks of another group of ascetics, those who were once married to each other, but are now married to God.

And what of the rest of Christendom? Are those who are married doomed to eternal damnation? Aphrahat never writes this. He maintains that marriage is a good and honorable thing; although, virginity is better. Aphrahat's concern is not for the married laity who are working in the world, but rather for his community of ascetics who had questions about the faith and later were being persecuted. As R. Murray remarks "Aphrahat is an ascetic writing for ascetics [...]"³⁸⁵ But those who are married do have hope for becoming temples of God. These married people, the holy ones, may choose to reject their earthly spouses and join with the Heavenly Spouse, Jesus Christ.

THE HOLY ONES (QADDISHĒ)

The right and dishe or the holy ones are the complement to the btule or "virgins" who are celibate from birth. One might characterize the holy ones as the "born-again virgins" as opposed to the "continual" virgins. Qaddishe is the technical term for the married but continent members of the

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³⁸³ Syr. Kring K agonā. For a discussion of this term, see page 78.

³⁸⁴ D 7:20 (PS I/345.6–14)

³⁸⁵ Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 202.

³⁸⁶ For a précis of the connection between the holy ones and the virgins, see Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, vol. 1, 72.

community, those who dedicate themselves to Christ fully after fulfilling familial duties.³⁸⁷

Aphrahat presents Moses as an example of an abstinent married person. The concept of married abstinence is based on Exodus 19:10–15 when Moses must avoid his wife in order to sanctify the people. Because of Moses' abstinence, he is able to see God and be purified. When a man is to enter into the place of God's presence, he should not approach a woman. Purity for the minister of the tabernacle or temple, including sexual purity, prior to entrance within the sacred place is essential. Pem. 18:4–6 is a long discussion of Moses' blessing and power coming from his staying away (in every sense) from his wife. Aphrahat states in no uncertain terms: "because if he [Moses] had performed the duties of marriage, he would not have been able to perform [the duties] of his Master's majesty." Aphrahat then parallels Moses' situation with that of Israel, who could not hear the word of God until they had purified themselves for three days. In Dem. Six, Aphrahat explains the command of Moses: "And also, he commanded the priests, that at the time of their ministry they should continue in holiness

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³⁸⁷ N. Koltun-Fromm examines how *qaddishē* functions on a more broad level in comparison with Rabbinic thought. She refutes the use of the term as merely a *terminus technicus* by those scholars who do not consider the full sense of the scriptural precedents. Naomi Koltun-Fromm, "*Qaddishutha* and Celibacy Between Purity and Holiness in Early Syriac Literature," read at the North American Syriac Symposium IV, Princeton, N.J. July 9–12, 2003. See also Naomi Koltun-Fromm, "Sexuality and Holiness," 375–395.

Along similar lines of inquiry, B. Visotzky notes that in the Leviticus Rabba 24:6 there is a pericope which suggests a more technical use of *qaddishā* "Why is the section about forbidden sexual unions juxtaposed with the holiness lection (*parashat qedoshim*)? To teach you that wherever you fence in sexual impropriety, there you find holiness. This is according to the teaching of R. Yehuda b. Pazi who said, Whoever guards himself against sexual impropriety is to be called holy (*qadosh*)." Burton L. Visotzky, "Three Syriac Cruxes," *JIS* 42 (1991): 174.

³⁸⁸ Brock, "Jewish Traditions," 217.

³⁸⁹ In some Eastern Orthodox seminaries, it is still taught that a priest should refrain from sexual relations with his wife before serving the liturgy.

³⁹⁰ D 18:4 (PS I/825.13–15)

[qaddishutā], and should not have intercourse with their wives."³⁹¹ Moses is the greatest example of a qaddishā, although he was not a permanent one; he only avoided his wife when he had to approach the meeting place of God. Aphrahat wishes that his continent ascetics would follow the path of holiness permanently.

Celibacy and sexual purity are integrally connected with the ability to communicate with God. As A. Vööbus explains, "The qaddise are a distinct group of believers who did not bring natural virginity to the Christian life but abandoned married life and started to observe sexual purity as holiness required by the Kergyma." A married person can become a temple of God, as long as that person becomes single, continent, and righteous. Aphrahat proclaims: "Let us be unceasing in his ministry, that he may make us to minister in the tabernacle of the holy ones [qaddishē]. Let us pray his prayer in purity, that it may enter into the presence of the Lord of Majesty." The reward for being in God's service is to be able to continue serving in the "abode of the saints." According to R. Murray, "The highest charism of [the Christian] life is sexual abstinence, holiness or consecration called 'qaddishta'" So, if one does not have the blessing of virginity, all is not lost; one may still become a "holy" person through continence, which then brings the blessing of righteousness.

This distinct group of ascetics brings a certain inclusivity to Aphrahat's texts that is not always highlighted. If a person is married, there is still hope for perfection and becoming a temple of God. The married person must choose, together with his mate, to become celibate. Abstinence from sex is no small matter; sexual purity is a pre-requisite for renewal and the indwelling of the Spirit. The result of the abstinence is being able to see and hear God.

As we have seen, part of the discipline that is necessary for becoming a temple is celibacy. Aphrahat employs many different terms and distinctions describing the celibates in Aphrahat's community. The singles (*ihidaye*) is the most general term for these ascetics. They are single minded in following *the*

³⁹¹ D 6:5 (PS I/261.26–264.1)

סאפ לבמוא פסג אוט, גרורנא גולשמשולמט, רסגשטולא נמסס, סלא נעברים, נשבמט.

³⁹² Vööbus, History of Asceticism, vol. 1, 106.

³⁹³ D 6:1 (PS I/241.19–22)

נחס אולעב הלבני באפניה ועובש, במפניה ומוישה בל בל בל האמה בניטולה: ולבטל מומ מין הבאלה וכמלה בל ביטולה ביטולה בל ביטולה ביטולה ביטולה בל ביטולה בל ביטולה ביטולה בל ביטולה ב

³⁹⁴ Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 12.

Single One, Jesus Christ. Aphrahat also discusses the Covenanters (bnay qyāmā), who were "set apart" lay members who served within local church communities. Many of the ascetics were virgins (btulē), and Aphrahat places great value upon virginity. The holy ones (qaddishē) were married people who gave up sex for the sake of the heavenly kingdom. The common denominator is that they are all solely dedicated to God. But the categories and delineations are blurred and overlap. As R. H. Connolly wrote almost one hundred years ago:

All then that has been said about the Solitaries applies to the *B'nai Q'yama*, and they formed therefore in the Church of Aphraates a class apart from the ordinary baptized laity. I admit that when all has been said some things remain obscure.³⁹⁵

Despite the obscurity of Aphrahat's definitions about the ascetic ones in his community, it is clear that the goal for dedication to God is being his temple.

³⁹⁵ Connolly, "Aphraates and Monasticism," 535.

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3 BEING A TEMPLE

Up to this point, the surrounding issues of Aphrahat's temple theology have been discussed: faith in Christ, the church, the sacraments, and the various ascetics of his community. We finally turn to the crux of the matter, the transformation of a person into a living, breathing, temple of God. All the previous aspects of the Christian life are part of the extensive process of perfection which allows for the ascetic to become a temple of God. As Aphrahat writes, in *Dem.* 1:3: "When one's whole building [body] is raised up, completed, and perfected, then it becomes a house and a temple for a dwelling place of Christ..." The perfection of the whole person involves a complete transformation of the person—inner, outer, and everything in between. The divine temple of the body is a fully functioning image within Aphrahat's anthropology. Aphrahat has many motifs working within this imagery: the inner person, the heart, prayer, "rest of the Lord," and "grieving the Spirit."

INNER PERSON

According to Aphrahat, when a person becomes a divine temple, God dwells within the "the inner person" (nāshā gawāyā). Three central "inner person" texts, Dem. 4:10, Dem. 4:13, and Dem. 6:1, reveal Aphrahat's temple imagery, emphasizing prayer offering and Christ dwelling within the "inner person." The first quotation is Dem. 4:10:

Our Lord's word tells us to "pray in secret in your heart, and shut the door." What is the door he says to shut, if not your mouth? Here is the temple in which Christ dwells, as the Apostle said: "You are the temple of the Lord," for him to enter into your inner person, into this

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³⁹⁶ D 1:3 (PS I/8.25–9.2)

³⁹⁷ Matt 6:6.

^{398 1} Cor 3:16.

house, to clean it from everything that is polluted, while the door of your mouth is shut.³⁹⁹

A parallel is set up between the physical Jerusalem temple and the individual person: the mouth is the door, and the inner person is the inner chamber or the holy of holies. The innermost room of the temple was the essence of holiness and off limits to all but the chief priest. In the Second Temple period, the chief priest could enter only once a year on the Day of Atonement, and only after he had attained an exceptional state of ritual purity. 400 Another parallel is implicitly set up in the above quotation, that of Christ being the high priest of the temple of the inner person. Christ the King inhabits the temple of the heart without diminishing his glory.⁴⁰¹ As S. Brock observes: "Thus the chamber to which Christ refers is no longer located somewhere in ordinary space, for it has been interiorised and transferred to sacred space."402 Aphrahat has made Christ's injunction to prayer in Matt 6:6 individual and personal, not communal. The transferral from the ordinary physical realm to the interior sacred realm is common in Aphrahat's thinking. The mundane is transformed into the divine, and a central instance of this transformation is the person. The sinful person is purified and then transformed completely into the dwelling place of God. Jesus is the high priest, and the person in whom he is dwelling must also function as a priest. The offering of pure prayer sacrifices is one way in which the baptized person may exercise this priestly role. 403 So a person who is the temple of God is both the place of sacrifice and the priest offering the sacrifice.

The second central "inner person" passage is *Dem.* 6:1: "Whoever receives the Spirit of Christ, let him decorate his inner man. Whoever is called

³⁹⁹ D 4:10 (PS I/157.19-26)

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⁴⁰⁰ Freedman, ed. *ABD*, s.v. "Temple, Jerusalem," and Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 46–60.

⁴⁰¹ Stewart, Working the Earth of the Heart, 212–213.

⁴⁰² Sebastian P. Brock, "The Prayer of the Heart in Syriac Tradition," *Sobornost* 4, 2 (1982): 134.

 $^{^{403}}$ See Brock, "The priesthood of the baptised," 18–19 for a discussion of this motif within the Syriac authors.

the temple of God, let him purify his body from all pollution."404 Here also, the place of divine residence is the inner person and this idea is promptly followed by a reference to both 1 Cor 3:16 and temple of God imagery. "Inner chamber" also describes the place in the body wherein anger and thoughts that are displeasing to God are to be stored by the person. Aphrahat directs: "Hide all these thoughts that arise in your heart inside your inner chamber."405 The unpleasing thoughts are to remain on earth; it is only the pure and good prayer, thoughts, or offerings which may ascend to the heavens.

The third quotation using the term "inner person" is also in the treatise "On Prayer," Dem. 4:13. Prayer is the primary function of the follower of Christ, and the heart is key. Aphrahat writes: "As I explained to you, the moment you start praying, raise your heart upwards and lower your eyes downwards; enter into your inner person and pray in secret to your Father in heaven."406 The Sage is reiterating the parable of the tax collector from Luke 18:13-14, who would not lift up his eyes to heaven. In this manner the supplicants will be exalted when they humble themselves. So, prayer is both an action of ascent and descent.

As Aphrahat explains in Dem. 4:13, prayer involves a dual action both towards the heavens and down inside the person. It is expansive and contractive at the same time. The physical eyes are to look down to the earth while the heart goes up to the heavens. The heart and the inner person function as virtual synonyms in the above, though the sense of the text is that the heart is moveable while the inner person is stationary. To use a twenty-first century metaphor, the heart contains a hyperlink to heaven, which when "double-clicked" allows entry into the heavenly realm. The heart may be functioning as a spiritual realm which may go to the heavens while the inner person must remain in the body which stays on earth. This dual action of ascent and descent occurs throughout Aphrahat's treatises; the sage is able to see God while his body is still on the earth, the prayers

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⁴⁰⁴ D 6:1 (PS I/252.9–12)

⁴⁰⁵ D 9:10 (PS I/432.2-4)

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are given here on earth but taken up to heaven by Gabriel, while the ultimate heavenly, and at the same time earthly, action is the incarnation of Jesus.⁴⁰⁷ In all three inner person passages, the temple of God and dwelling of the divine are located inside the person and most commonly associated with the heart.

HEART AND PRAYER

The faithful person's heart is the home of God. Two quotations describe the role of the heart in reference to the divine, both from Aphrahat's last Demonstration, twenty-three, "On the Grapecluster." The first passage is: "We have conceived and given birth to you in our heart, and we are [becoming] your likeness in our intellect." The divine image dwelling in the human heart occurs later in the passage: "Your majesty burrows into the little heart, you have made of us temples wherein your glory dwells." The smallest innermost recesses of the Creator's creature contains the greatest of the divine. This temple imagery connects intimately with Aphrahat's heart imagery.

The heart stands for the whole person in Aphrahat's theology. He follows the Hebrew scriptural tradition of the human body being an indivisible entity with the *nefesh* (soul), *guf* (body), and *ruah* (spirit).⁴¹⁰ Aphrahat does not have a dichotomy of body versus soul or spirit, nor does he divide the body from the soul.⁴¹¹ All aspects of the person unite into a whole; it is the whole person who becomes the temple of God. S. Brock explains:

[...] it was the 'body' and not the soul which St. Paul (1 Cor 6:19) described as the 'temple of the Holy Spirit within you.' It is not a case of body versus soul, but of body *and* soul: the 'heart' is doubly the center of the psychosomatic entity that makes up the human person.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁷ D 4:13 (PS I/168.11–169.6) See below, page 189.

⁴⁰⁸ D 23:59 (PS II/120.21–22)

⁴⁰⁹ D 23:59 (PS II/121.12–13)

خبك حلك ولاحمله دوبعموم:

[:]מונה אלים בינות בינות

⁴¹¹ Brock, "Prayer of the Heart," 132. See also Terzoli, "Âme et Esprit chez Aphraate," 105–118.

⁴¹² Brock, "Prayer of the Heart," 133. Cf. Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan*, vol. 1, 182. Her observation that a study of Aphrahat's anthropology is very difficult is

It is through the Spirit of Christ taking up residence within the righteous person's heart that the whole being becomes a temple of God whose function is then to offer up the sacrifice of prayer.

Aphrahat, as the pastor for his flock, is primarily concerned about the spiritual welfare of his audience. He teaches that pure prayer is the most acceptable sacrifice from a person, and about the ultimate sacrifice—Jesus Christ. In *Dem.* Four, "On Prayer," Aphrahat explains in copious detail what prayer is, how one should pray and even what to pray. As he concludes:

See, my friend, that sacrifices and offerings have been rejected, and in exchange prayer has been chosen. Henceforth, love pure prayer, and labor in petition, and at the start of all your prayers, pray the prayer of your Lord. Be diligent about everything that I have written you, and whenever you pray, remember your friend.⁴¹³

The sage teaches that prayer is something to be practiced and is hard work. But the effort is worth while, because: "Among all offerings, pure prayer is the best." The inner liturgical role of the heart which functions as altar for prayer sacrifices is a common motif in Syriac spirituality. The faithful

heartily seconded by this author. As Pierre points out, once one starts analyzing one aspect of his thought, then everything promptly follows: humanity, God, morals, etc.

⁴¹³ D 4:19 (PS I/181.16–22)

⁴¹⁴ D 4:18 (PS I/177.7-8)

Brock also observes that 'pure prayer' is found in the Syriac Bible in 1 Chron

16:42 but not the Hebrew, Greek, and other versions. Brock, "Prayer of the Heart," 135.

⁴¹⁵ Brock, "Fire from Heaven," 240. The *Liber Graduum* 12:2 describes the physical church balanced with the heavenly: "But [it is] through these visible things that we will be in these heavenly things which are not visible to the eyes of flesh, our bodies becoming temples and our hearts altars." (c.288.23–26)

אלא גובן מלים גיבולעודם נמסא במלים גלא מלאעודם גביביא לבינא גרבינאי בינ נמסס פעדים מדבלא סלבדם מהבעא

As S. Brock states: "The heart is in the three dimensional liturgy, visible Church here on earth, the Church of the heart of the individual Christian and the Christian is supposed to work very hard at offering prayer sacrifices to Christ.

In order to give a pure offering of prayer to God, one prerequisite is a pure heart. Aphrahat's biblical sources for the necessity of a pure heart are Ps 24:3–4, Ps 51, 1 Cor 3:16, and Matt 5:8 among many other scriptural passages.⁴¹⁶ Psalm 24 declares that the pure of heart will be able to ascend to the holy place. In Psalm 51, the priority is a clean heart and a right spirit with which to give the sacrifice.⁴¹⁷ One cannot come into the presence of the Lord without being purified.⁴¹⁸ Paul uses Ps 51 in 1 Cor 3:16.⁴¹⁹ The result of having a pure heart is being able to see the divine, as the beatitude

heavenly Church." (Brock, *Syriac Fathers on Prayer*, xxvi). One agenda in the LG is to defend the authority of the visible church by connecting the transformation of the person into a temple with respect for the visible church. Aphrahat does not have this concern; he focuses upon correct prayer and sacrifice at the personal level.

116 Some other key Hebrew scripture passages are: "keep heart clean" Ps 73:13, Prov 20:9, Cf. Sir 38:10, "pure in heart" Ps 73:1. "No ritual can purify the heart; a 'pure heart' and a 'steadfast spirit' are the gift of Yahweh alone." Botterweck, ed. TDOT, s.v. "לב leb," by H. J. Fabry. See also Deirdre A. Dempsey, "The Phrase Purity of Heart' in Early Syriac Writings," in Purity of Heart in Early Ascetic and Monastic Literature, eds. Harriet Luckman and Linda Kulzer (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999): 31–44; Stephen Bonian, "Purity of Heart in Syriac Prayer," Diakonia 22, 2 (1989): 121–126; and Brock, Syriac Fathers on Prayer, xxviii-xxix, for a discussion of the "luminous heart" a term which Aphrahat does not use, but is key in later Syriac spirituality.

⁴¹⁷ Aphrahat quotes parts of Ps 51 four times in his *Demonstrations*. Twice he uses the psalm in Dem 2:6 concerning what is the correct sacrifice to God, namely a contrite heart and a humble spirit. (Ps 51:13,14 and 19, D 2:6 (PS I/60.24–61.2)) Following these quotations, Aphrahat uses Ps 51:13 in Dem. 6:16 (PS I/300.10) concerning how the Holy Spirit may leave a sinful person. The last quotation from Ps 51:4 is in Dem. 7:14 (PS I/333.20–22), where Aphrahat writes about the penitent being forgiven by God.

⁴¹⁸ Ps 24:3–4. "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully." Similar sentiments are found in many other sources in the scriptures.

Purity of heart is needed even to fast. As Aphrahat states: "And if there is no purity of heart, the fast is not accepted." D 3:2 (PS I/101:10–11)

האלבים אל האסב באל ארים ביטאל באיז ביטאל בי

in Matthew promises: Matt 5:8 "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God." As J. Raasch comments: "It is on these texts that the Fathers base their teaching that purity of heart is a preliminary goal of the Christian life in relation to the ultimate end, the vision of God."420 Aphrahat also draws similar conclusions from the scriptures and is fully within the exegetical tradition of Philo of Alexandria,421 and Origen,422 among others. Aphrahat often describes a person as being or having a place of prayer.

⁴²⁰ Juana Raasch, "The Monastic Concept of Purity of Heart and Its Sources Part 1," *Studia Monastica* 8 (1966): 21.

⁴²¹ Philo, (20 B.C.E.–50 C.E.), was an Alexandrian Jew who presented the Hebrew scriptures through a Greek philosophical lens. His writings had a great influence on Origen and many other Christian writers. He presents a particular perspective on the temple: he considers the whole cosmos to be the temple of God. It may be that Aphrahat did have access to a few of Philo's works or that our Sage is echoing a commonly held Jewish tradition which is also evident in Philo's writings. The latter scenario is the most plausible. See *De specialibus legibus* I, XII, 66–67. Philo of Alexandria, *The Special Laws*, trans. Francis H. Colson, vol. VII, Loeb edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), 136–139. Philo of Alexandria, *Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie*, vol. 24, *De Specialibus Legibus*, eds. Roger Arnaldez, Jean Pouilloux, and Claude Mondésert (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1961), 48–50.

Aphrahat and Philo both write that the soul should be the temple for the divine. Philo explains: "And I will walk among you, and will be your God. (Leviticus 26:12): but in the understandings of those who are still undergoing cleansing and have not yet fully washed their life defiled and stained by the body's weight there walk angels, divine words, making them bright and clean with the doctrines of all that is good and beautiful. It is quite manifest what troops of evil tenants are ejected, in order that One, the good one, may enter and occupy. Be zealous therefore, O soul, to become a house of God, a holy temple, a most beauteous abiding-place." *De somniis*, I, XXIII, 148–150. Philo of Alexandria, *De Somniis On Dreams*, vol. V, Loeb, 136–139, trans. Francis H. Colson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 375–377.

"Περιπατήσω ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῶν θεόςἄ (Λες.26,12)-, ταῖς δὲ τῶν ἔτιἀπολουομένων, μήπω δὲ κατὰ τὸ παντελὲς ἐκνιψαμένων τὴν ῥυπῶσαν καὶ κεκηλισωμένην <ἐν> σώμασι βαρέσι ζωὴν ἄγγελοι, λόγοι θεῖοι, φαιδρύνοντες αὐτάς τοῖς καλοκἀγαθίας δόγμασιν. [149] "Όσα δὲ ἔξοι-κίζεται κακῶν οἰκητόρων στίφη, ἵνα εἷς ὁ ἀγαθὸς εἰσοικίσηται, δῆλόν ἐστι. Σπούδαζε οὖν, ὧ ψυχή, θεοῦ οἶκος γενέσθαι, ἱερὸν ἄγιον, ἐνδιαίτημα κάλλιστον."

Philo of Alexandria, Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie, vol. 19, De Somniis, ed. Pierre Savinel (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962), 84–87. J. Raasch cites this passage in "The Monastic Concept of Purity of Heart and Its Sources Part 3," Studia Monastica 10 (1968). 11.

When a person is able to give an acceptable offering to God, it will be carried to heaven and laid at the heavenly altar by none other than Gabriel himself. As Aphrahat describes:

Thus you should keep in your mind⁴²³ that your prayer has been left in front of the altar, and if he [Gabriel] who presents prayers does not want to carry it from the earth, it is because he inspected it and found it to be a faulty offering. If the offering is pure, he raises it up before God. [...] And if you are willing to forgive, then he [Gabriel] who offers up prayers will receive your offering and raise it up; but if you do not forgive, then he will say to you: 'I will not bring your polluted offering before the sacred throne.' Instead you will go there and give an account to your Creditor, taking your offering with you, while he [Gabriel] will leave your offering and go off.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–c. 254 C.E.) is one of the foremost Christian exegetes of the early church. Both Aphrahat and Origen are steeped in the scriptures and both have great affinity for the Pauline corpus. Their common ideas are likely due to their common scriptural teacher. Some common motifs between Aphrahat and Origen are: Christians being of different levels, the simple and the perfect, prayer as sacrifice, and the eyes of the head and the eyes of the heart being able to see God. See Origen, On Prayer, XXVII, 5. Origen, Die Schrift Vom Gebet, 366; On Prayer, II.2 Origen, Die Schrift Vom Gebet, 299; and On Prayer, IX. 2 Origen, Die Schrift Vom Gebet, 318. See Aphrahat's use of the "seeing God" motif in Chapter Five, page 165.

Origen, Contra Celsum VIII:18 "And every one who imitates Him according to his ability, does by this very endeavor raise a statue according to the image of the Creator for in the contemplation of God with a pure heart they become imitators of Him. ... Thus the Spirit of Christ dwells in those who bear, so to say, a resemblance in form and feature to Himself." Origène, Contre Celse, SC Vol. IV, vol. 150, ed. Marcel Borret (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 211–215.

"Καὶ ἐν ἑκάστῳ δὲ τῶν κατὰ δύναμιν ἐκείνον καὶ ἐν τούτῳ μιμησαμένωνἐστὶν ἄγαλμα τὸ "κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος," ὅπερ κατασκευάζουσι τῷ ἐνορᾶν θεῷ καθαρᾳ καρδίᾳ, "μιμηταὶ" γενόμενοι "τοῦ θεοῦ."... οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῖς, ἵν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω, συμμόρφοις ἐφιζάνει."

Origen, Origenes Werke: Gegen Celsus, vol. 2, ed. Paul Koetschau (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1899), 235–236.

423 Syr. Kheritā.

 $^{424}\ D\ 4:13\ (PS\ I/168.11-15\ and\ 168.23\ -169.6)$

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Gabriel as the one who serves at the heavenly altar and who brings prayers before God is a traditional motif in Jewish and Christian literature.⁴²⁵ Gabriel functions as a high priest, judge, and messenger.⁴²⁶ Aphrahat follows in a longstanding tradition concerning the heavenly temple and the servers therein. The imagery of the heavenly temple is quite detailed; there is the prayer offering, Gabriel—the high priest, the heavenly temple altar, and even a mention of God's sacred throne.⁴²⁷

The heart raised to the heavens as a sacrifice is analogous to the burnt offerings of the Hebrew scriptures. Aphrahat's arguments about prayer being a better sacrifice than burnt offerings is nothing new. As S. Brock writes: "There is a case of clear continuity in expression of certain underly-

משבת אול משבת מות אולם ו (...) השבת מים הבים אול השבה אול משבת מות בערה ולובע האר בערה מים בערה האלם בילה האר שבה הלו השבה האר שבה הלוה האר שבבה הלוה האר שבבה הלוה השבה הלובע השבה לובע השבה לובע השבה לבול שבבה לבילה שבה לובע בילה להובע האר שבול להובע האר שבול להובע הארשה לובע להובע להובע להובע להובע הארבע הארבע

⁴²⁵ Common biblical and Second Temple literary references to Gabriel are: Daniel 8:16, 9:21, Luke 1:19, 26 (The Annunciation), and *1 Enoch* 9:1, 40:9, 54:6, 71:8. Gabriel also appears in the Aggadah Numbers Rabbah 2:10 referring to Enoch 9:1, and Genesis Rabbah 18:5. Also Ap. Mos. 40:2, in Qumran 1 QM 9:14–16. Freedman, ed. *ABD*, s.v. "Gabriel," by Carol A. Newsom.

⁴²⁶ Gabriel is not specifically mentioned by name in this excerpt, but it is clear from other quotations that Aphrahat means Gabriel. He is mentioned by name in D 4:8 (PS I/153.20–23) in the context of Jonah's prayer and the path it traveled. "...it (the prayer of Jonah) pierced the cloud, flew in the air, opened the heavens, and came before the throne of majesty [rabbutā] by means of Gabriel who offers prayers before God."

ociet ein oeiuk enni oekuk sain ooiek ara eoioun rieokn er eeinel kaie elikh ara nloon.

Other mentions of Gabriel by name are as follows: four times in Demonstration 3 on Fasting, three times in Dem. 19 on Against the Jews, once in Dem 4, 6, 20, and 21. D 3:14 (PS I/129:8–10), D 3:14 (PS I/132:3), D 3:15 (PS I/133:14–17), D 3:16 (PS I/136.5), D 6:10 (PS I/281.2), D 9:4 (PS I/417.2–23), D 19:9 (PS I/877.2), D 19:10 (PS I/880.8–14), D 19:12 (PS I/888.15), D 20:11 (PS I/912.3), D 21:10 (PS I/960.5).

⁴²⁷ Aphrahat's description of the Holy Spirit and Gabriel do not have much in common. The Holy Spirit is one of the Trinity (D 23:63 PS II/133.3–8), dwells in the baptized (D 6:14 PS I/ 292.15–293.5), cures all illnesses (D 23:52 PS II/100.10–13) and can be grieved and leave if the person sins too much (D 6:1 (PS I/ 252.9–13).

ing symbolic thought patterns common to Judaism and Christianity."⁴²⁸ He shows the similarities between Aphrahat's writings about prayer and those from Ps 140:2,⁴²⁹ Ben Sira 32 (35):8⁴³⁰ and the *Babylonian Talmud Ta'anit* 2a which is "What kind of service is it which takes place in the heart? We must answer. It is prayer."⁴³¹ Aphrahat's own description of prayer as sacrifice functions within this tradition.

The Sage uses common imagery from Hebrew scripture and even common arguments in order to teach his audience how to refute the Jews. As Aphrahat explains his motivation:

Therefore, I have written you this brief answer so that you may defend yourself when it is necessary to give a word and strengthen the intellect of whoever is listening, so that they will not yield to the seditious argument of [the Jews].⁴³²

Aphrahat notes throughout his *Demonstrations* that Jesus Christ is the ultimate sacrifice and it is because of his incarnation and sacrifice that all other sacrifices are abrogated. He then argues that the Jews are no longer the people of God, Israel, because they rejected Christ, and therefore the Christians are the new Israel. As he writes:

And because they [the Jews] rejected his kingdom, he took⁴³³ the kingdom away from them, for the One [Jesus Christ] to whom the kingdom

محمل هنه ملل فيهم برخلام لم منه بدلاهم وزورتم عد ملكم ورماله المراحدة ولا كريم وملكم المسلل المارسلام المراجعة المعلام المراحدة المراجعة المراجعة

⁴²⁸ Brock, "Fire from Heaven," 242.

⁴²⁹ Ps 141:2 "Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice." Brock is correct in noting the similarities of Aphrahat's ideas with this Psalmic verse, but it is interesting that Aphrahat never quotes this verse verbatim. Given the Sage's predilection for quoting from scriptures, this is very striking.

⁴³⁰ The *Peshitta* has "Let him decide to pray in his heart."

⁴³¹ Joseph Rabbinowitz, "Ta'anith," *The Babylonian Talmud Seder Mo'ed*, vol. IV, ed. Isidore Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1938), 3. col. 2a. Aphrahat does not cite Ps 141:2 explicitly but the sentiment is most definitely present in his texts.

⁴³² D 19:12 (PS I/885.26–888.3)

⁴³³ Syr. Law shqal. In the active sense this verb has the meaning of lifting up, bearing, partaking, or receiving.

belongs has come. He ascended as a living sacrifice for us, and abolished their sacrifices.⁴³⁴

Aphrahat suggests further that the sacrifices of the Israelites were rejected even before Jesus was incarnate. 435 For Aphrahat, faith in Jesus Christ is the core of his argument against the Jews.

The faithful have Christ living within their hearts; the hearts become the place of prayer sacrifice, and the body is then the temple. The Divine is not limited to the small space of the human heart, he suffuses the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. The person who is a divine temple gives sacrifices of prayer on the heart, but there is more. Prayer is not merely contemplation and petition, it is also charitable actions on behalf of other people.

REST OF GOD

To be a functioning divine temple, a person must offer sacrifices of prayer, both contemplative and active. In *Dem.* Four "On Prayer," Aphrahat expounds upon the relationship between the "rest of God," prayer, and action: ⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ D 2:6 (PS I/60.2–6)

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 435 See D 15:7 (PS I/748–753) and D 16:3 (PS I/765–772). Demonstration 16 "On the peoples in place of the people" is solely dedicated to this argument.

436 The "Rest" of God (حصارة ميد المنظم بينه بينه المنظم بينه المنظم ال

One of the Septuagint equivalents for nûah is anápausis (ἀνάπαυσις) which can mean everything from the Sabbath, to dwelling, or a land of rest. (Gen 49:15) Nûah is used twenty two times, with the verbal variant of ynûah occurring eight times. The Septuagint translators only use anápausis for nûah eight times, see Isa 23:12, 27:10, 32:18, Eccl 7:9, Prov 21:16, 21:20, Mic 2:10, and Exod 23:12. Exod 23:12 is interesting for the connection between the Sabbath, rest (nûah), and in the LXX, anápausis. H. D. Preuss notes that "Despite the importance of "rest" in Israelite spirituality, it is interesting to note that it never appears as an aspect of eschatological hope in the OT." (Botterweck, ed. TDOT, s.v. "TÜN Nûah," by H. D. Preuss.) A nuance to this statement is that the term "shakan," the root of the word

For the prophet says: "This is my rest; give rest to the weary." (Isa 28:12) Therefore give the rest of God and you will have no necessity to say "Forgive me." Give rest to the weary, and visit the sick, and provide for the poor: this is indeed prayer. As I shall explain to you, my friend, whenever someone gives the rest of God, that is prayer.⁴³⁷

Aphrahat's interpretation of Isaiah 28:12 is rather standard at this point. He cites examples of charitable acts for those in need; this is giving the "rest of God," and it is also accounted as prayer. But he goes on in this passage to give an extreme example from scriptures of prayer in action which he interprets as being the rest of God.

For it is written: "When Zimri fornicated with the Midianite woman, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, saw him, and entered into the room and killed the two of them." (Num 25:6–8) And his killing was accounted as prayer, for David says of him, "Phinehas rose up and prayed, and it was reckoned a reward for him, for ever and ever." (Ps 106:30–31) Because

"shekinah," means to dwell, but it also may mean to rest. The Shekintā of the Lord has some eschatological or at least heavenly overtones. For a further discussion about Aphrahat's use of Shekintā, see page 153. Preuss' comment stands in contrast to the use of rest in the New Testament, which uses the term "ἀνάπαυσις" as the rest of the dead and the "place of the rest promised to the Jewish disciple of wisdom in Mt. 11:28f." (G. Kittel, ed. TDNT, s.v. "ἀνάπαυσις," by O. Bauernfeind.) The broad use of this term suggests that the rest of God is both a locality and an activity. Aphrahat is using the word in the latter sense.

The "Rest of the Lord" motif is quite common throughout early Jewish and Christian literature. The image is in Philo, Qumran, the Acts of Thomas, the Gospel of Thomas, the Odes of Solomon, the Liber Graduum, and the Macarian literature. See Jon Laansma, "I Will Give You Rest": The Rest Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Mt 11 and Heb 3–4 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1997), 112; Ernst Bammel, "Rest and Rule," VC 23 (1969): 88–90; Kristine Ruffatto, "In His Rest Shalt Thou Rest": The Concept of Rest in the Acts of Thomas and Its Roots in Jewish Rest Tradition," (Milwaukee, WI, unpublished, 2004); and Susan Ramsey, "The Sabbath and Rest in Aphrahat the Persian Sage and Macarius," read at North American Patristics Society, Loyola University, May 28, 2004.

⁴³⁷ D 4:14 (PS I/169.16–23)

he killed them for the sake of his God, it was accounted as prayer for him.⁴³⁸

According to M. Barker, Phinehas was a popular example of extreme piety and his murderous action was described as atonement by some Zealots in the first century C.E. Because of Phinehas' actions he was given the covenant of priesthood and peace.⁴³⁹ Aphrahat follows in this interpretive vein by ascribing a positive value judgement to Phinehas' actions; it was prayer, not murder. After this rather gory example of correct behavior from scripture, Aphrahat addresses his present audience with a specific recommendation:

Watch out, my friend, that, when an opportunity for giving rest to the will of God comes to you, you do not say, "The time for prayer is at hand. I will pray and then I will act.' For while you are trying to finish your prayer, the opportunity for bringing about rest will have slipped away from you, and your ability to bring about the will and the rest of God will have been diminished. Through your prayer you will be guilty of sin. However, if you bring about the rest of God, it will be prayer. 440

Aphrahat extols action over using prayer as an excuse for inaction. The passage suggests that his audience is more interested in pious prayer than charitable actions. Or is Aphrahat suggesting that his audience ought to raise arms and attack someone who is impious? The *Demonstrations* do not allow us to say, but it is an interesting explanation of what the "rest of the Lord" may be.

⁴³⁸ D 4:14 (PS I/169.24–172.6)

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⁴³⁹ Barker, The Great High Priest, 40.

⁴⁴⁰ D 4:14 (PS I/172.6–14)

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Aphrahat does use rest in a less murderous manner to refer to the Sabbath and giving help to the poor. As S. Brock observes: Aphrahat thus makes it clear that purity of heart is no monopoly of the contemplative life: it is just as essential in the active life. An Becker suggests that Aphrahat has another polemical concern related to charitable acts, namely, that he has an anti-Jewish stance. As Becker observes, for many people, food is money, and in Aphrahat's time many of his flock were going to the synagogues to receive charitable aid. Aphrahat's argument is that charity must begin at home, so to speak, as he writes in *Dem.* 20:1:

This gift is great and glorious when it is found in a discerning person, when he gives to the poor from the work of his hands, which does not come from robbing others, as God said by the prophet: "This is my rest: give rest to the weary and this is the way of whoever hears it." (Isa 28:12) 444

Christians must give support to the poor and take care of their own—this then is giving the rest of the Lord.

The rest of the Lord is also a title for the followers of Jesus; they are the people of rest. "Whoever loves the tree which has these fruits, blessed is his soul, for his soul dwells in rest, and in his soul dwells Christ, who is pleased with the people of rest and of the humble." Rest and humility are synonyms in this passage. One who gives rest or helps those who are in need is a humble person and thus someone who is following the tenets of Christ and giving the rest of God. Aphrahat also describes Christ: "You dwell among the men of rest, you abide among the humble, you rest your-

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⁴⁴¹ D 22:13 (PS I/1020.17). In a passage describing the various possibilities of "place," Aphrahat calls heaven the "the Sabbath of God" or אבראלה האשב shabateh dalāhā.

⁴⁴² Brock, "Prayer of the Heart," 140.

⁴⁴³ Becker, "Anti-Judaism and Care," 324.

⁴⁴⁴ D 20:1 (PS I/893.1–6)

⁴⁴⁵ D 9:14 (PS I/441.19–21) Isa 66:1.

self among the men of rest and the good."446 The action of Christ coming to live in the good person is described as resting. The rest of the Lord has many different uses in these works: actions of prayer, prayer itself, description of where the righteous people go at the end, and as a synonym for the indwelling of God in the believer. Aphrahat is far from being alone in his presentation of the rest of God, his writings are in harmony with another Syriac text *The Odes of Solomon*.

The author of the Odes and Aphrahat both present God as indwelling in followers and describing this indwelling as divine rest.⁴⁴⁷ Ode 12 declares: "For the dwelling place of the Word is man, and his truth is love." Following the love motif, Ode 3:5 suggests that the dwelling of the divine may be portrayed using the term "rest": "I love the Beloved and I love in my soul, and where his rest is, there I am too." The place of rest as the tem-

⁴⁴⁶ D 23:59 (PS II/121.16–18)

The Odes of Solomon is a collection of hymns about which very little scholarly consensus exists. All that is agreed upon by scholars about these texts is that they are a collection of poetic hymns and they most definitely were not written by Solomon. I am following M. Franzmann's conclusion that "... the Odes stand as a collection and must have been used as such since the third century C.E. This fact is borne out by reference to the Odes by number in two of the earliest works in which they are quoted: the Pistis Sophia and Lactantius' Divinae Institutiones." (Franzmann, "A Study of the Odes," 373.) It will be presumed that the Odes likely were written in Syriac, were used as a collection of hymns since the third century C.E., have had a place within the Syriac literary corpus, and that they likely predate Aphrahat at least by a few decades. The Odes help to set the stage for Aphrahat's insights concerning the image of temple within the spiritual life.

⁴⁴⁸ Ode 12:12

ple of God's rest is a very common idea.⁴⁵⁰ Charlesworth observes that: "'His rest' is parallel to 'place' or *monai*, possibly night-stops or resting places, in John."⁴⁵¹ Franzmann also summarizes the Odist's ascent theology:

In [Ode] 36:1, resting on the Spirit is the decisive moment leading to the ascent of the Odist which ends in glorification. The Odist 'stands in rest' (26:12), composes 'Odes of rest' (cf. 26:3), and exhorts others to come into Paradise and recline upon the Lord's rest (20:7–8).⁴⁵²

In the *Odes*, the movement of ascent to the heavens occurs through the paradoxical state of a person being at rest in the spirit coupled with having the indwelling of the higher power. Being at rest is not a passive state of being; it leads to the person praising the Lord.

Aphrahat also uses the "rest of the Lord" in an active rather than passive sense in *Dem.* 4:14 and other passages. For Aphrahat, the works of rest are those that are good and help the person to become a divine resting place. In the Odes, the praising of God occurs when the person is able to ascend to the heavens to glorify the Lord.⁴⁵³ But those who do not give "the rest of God" in an active sense run the risk of "grieving the Spirit."

GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

Praying pure prayers of the heart, right actions of charity, baptism and eucharist; none are guarantees that the Spirit will remain with you or that you will remain a temple of God. To remain a temple for the Spirit, a person must keep from "grieving the Spirit" (حدم المحدم miq lruha) because the Spirit will leave if grieved. For example, the ascetic might grieve the Spirit by: disobedience, lying, failure to forgive, returning to wanton ways, drunkenness, gossiping, anger, or cruelty. 454 It is interesting to note that Aphrahat does not think that impurity or grieving the Spirit comes from sex

⁴⁵⁰ See further discussion of rest as a theme in Aphrahat, page 117.

⁴⁵¹ Charlesworth, *Odes of Solomon*, 301. He further suggests that Ode 3:5 has parallels with John 14:2 and 17:24. See also Brian McNeil, "The Odes of Solomon and the Scriptures," *OrChr* 67 (1983), 104–122.

⁴⁵² Majella Franzmann, "Portrait of a Poet: Reflections on 'the Poet' in the Odes of Solomon," in *Perspectives on Language and Text*, eds. Edgar W. Conrad and Edward G. Newing. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 319–320.

⁴⁵³ The ascent passages referring to the Odist are Odes 18:1, 21:6, 29:4, and 36:1. Cf. Franzmann, "A Study of the Odes," 391 for a discussion of this image.

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. D 6:1 (PS I/251–252).

or other physical bodily impurities; but rather, from actions.⁴⁵⁵ As Aphrahat warns the Covenanters in Demonstration Six:

Whoever receives the Spirit of Christ, let him decorate his inner man. Whoever is called the temple of God,⁴⁵⁶ let him purify his body from all pollution. Whoever grieves the Spirit of Christ⁴⁵⁷ shall not lift up his head from griefs. Whoever receives⁴⁵⁸ the body of Christ, let him keep his body from all pollution.⁴⁵⁹

These four sentences encapsulate Aphrahat's temple imagery, including the admonition about the consequences for betraying this great honor. As the Lord left the Jerusalem temple in Ezekiel 8–11 because of Israel's sinfulness, so too, the Spirit of God will leave any person who becomes impure.

Aphrahat especially highlights that the person who receives the body of Christ, the eucharist, has a great responsibility because of it. Since the mouth is the vehicle for the indwelling of God, one must use the mouth correctly. If the mouth sins then there is the possibility that the Divine will no longer remain with the person. Aphrahat warns his audience: "For there is one door to your house, which is a temple of God, and you should not allow dung and mud to go out the door by which the King enters!" ⁴⁶⁰ Aphrahat builds on the Gospel passage from the Sermon on the Mount in Mark 7:18–23 and Matt 15:18 which states that nothing entering from outside will defile a person, but it is rather what comes out that is the problem. The Sage also uses imagery from Ps 24:7: "Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in." It is

⁴⁵⁵ My thanks to Dr. Naomi Koltun-Fromm for noting this important point in a personal correspondence, November 2006.

⁴⁵⁶ 1 Cor 3:16.

⁴⁵⁷ Eph 4:30.

⁴⁵⁸ Syr. Shqal

⁴⁵⁹ D 6:1 (PS I/252.9–15)

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⁴⁶⁰ See also Burkitt, Early Eastern Christianity, 122.

D 3:2 (PS I/101.18-22)

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through receiving God via the mouth that he is able to live in us, both literally and figuratively. The injunction on impurity from the Sage is expanded to include an injunction against wrong speaking either in anger⁴⁶¹ or heresy,⁴⁶² and wrong actions.⁴⁶³ False doctrines and blasphemy were threats to Aphrahat's community, so he is very concerned about wrong words leading his flock astray.⁴⁶⁴ In a reference to Judas, Aphrahat warns his audience: "Guard your lips from deception, for they give kisses to the son of the King."⁴⁶⁵ Because the mouth and lips are the instruments by which Jesus enters into the person through the eucharist, the instruments must be kept clean, lest the Spirit becomes aggrieved.

 461 D 14:16 (PS I/612.17–18) "And the sons of peace suppress arguing to be worthy of becoming sons of the Father in heaven."

One of the many means by which the followers of Jesus may become the sons of the Father is through no longer quarrelling and being angry. Aphrahat's antianger stance suggests that he has a pastoral concern of keeping a community functioning together peacefully.

⁴⁶² "For who will give a reward to Marcion who did not confess our good Creator? And further who will answer Valentinian for his fast, who preached that there are many creators, saying that a perfect God has not been spoken and no intellect has studied him? And who will give a reward to the sons of darkness for the teaching of the impious Mani, who dwells in the darkness in the likeness of snakes, and the Chaldean art, the teaching of Babel? See all these fast, but their fast is not accepted." D 3:9 (PS I/116.6–17)

⁴⁶³ In D 6:8 (PS I/272–276) Aphrahat's exhortation explains in great poetic detail the correct actions expected of solitaries, monks, virgins, and saints.

⁴⁶⁴ D 1:19 (PS I/44.20–22, 24–26) "This is the faith of God's Church: that one should separate oneself from [...] empty doctrines, which are tools of the Evil One, from the flattery of sweet words, from blasphemy and from adultery."

⁴⁶⁵ D 9:10 (PS I/432.18–19)

השבחול עונמד ב בלבחולא ומנים אנול כמש לבו בלבא.

Aphrahat uses two texts from the Hebrew scripture and one from the Pauline corpus to support his position concerning the transitory nature of the Spirit's indwelling in human beings. The first proof comes from a discussion of Genesis 6:7. The sons of Adam are the first to grieve the Spirit: "And when they were many, they were corrupted and impious, until they saddened and grieved their Creator's spirit by their sins, and he said, 'I regret that I made them' (Gen 6:7)."466 The second example of the Spirit being aggrieved comes from 1 Samuel 16:14. Aphrahat uses this to exhort his audience to better behavior. Thus, he writes:

I will teach you about that [which is] written, that the Spirit does not always remain with those who receive him. For it is written that Saul received the Holy Spirit when he was anointed, but he grieved the Spirit and the Spirit left him. Then God sent to him instead an evil spirit.⁴⁶⁷

Because of King Saul's sin, Saul lost the indwelling of the Spirit he had received. Paul's exhortation is also quite direct, and it is the primary framework from which Aphrahat works. Ephesians 4:30–32 says:

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Aphrahat uses the passage to focus upon one of his primary pastoral concerns, that if his community continues to fight among themselves, there will be dire consequences.

The sons of Adam who were destroyed in the Flood, King Saul, and Paul's exhortation set the scriptural stage from which Aphrahat presents his interpretation of sin, which is defined as "grieving the Spirit." The danger of sin is ever present, even for those who are to become temples of the Divine, as Aphrahat warns in *Dem.* Six: "Therefore let us prepare our temples

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⁴⁶⁶ D 18:2 (PS I/820.23–26)

for the Spirit of Christ, and let us not grieve him so that he may not leave us." ⁴⁶⁸ In another passage, he defines the humble as those who are pleasing to the Spirit:

Humility is planted among them and it brings fruits of faith and love. They are clothed by the Messiah as by a good bridegroom, and they guard [themselves] from all impurity. The Spirit whom they received dwells in them, he is loving with them, and they do not grieve him. They decorate their temples for the Great King, who enters and dwells in the people of rest and the humble.⁴⁶⁹

The people who are able to keep the Spirit always within themselves are those who are quiet, meek, and humble.

There seem to have been some in Aphrahat's audience who were flouting these directives. We get the distinct impression that Aphrahat's community was not comprised of meek and mild people; if it were so, then he would not have to continually commend all of these virtues so vociferously. Aphrahat tells us that within those who are sinful, Satan dwells, not God. F. Gavin explains this phenomenon:

Aphraates taught that God was born in man when he by a free act of will acknowledged and recognized His Creator. This indwelling presence of God in the heart of man, His creature, is lost by sin. Aphraates intimates that the sinner loses the presence of God by his sin, in that sin, (disobedience), is a declaration of unbelief or a repudiation of God's primary relation to man as Creator and Lord.⁴⁷⁰

A sure sign of Satan's occupation of a person is jealousy or anger. This is a dangerous state which has terrible consequences, according to Aphrahat:

But if he [Satan] hears a man in whom Christ dwells speaking hateful words, or angry, or quarrelling, or fighting, then Satan knows that Christ

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⁴⁶⁸ D 6:14 (PS I/292.19–21)

is not with the man, and Satan comes and performs his will in the man.⁴⁷¹

Satan watches to see when the Spirit leaves a person, then takes advantage of the situation to dwell in turn in the abandoned heart of the person.

But a thief does not break into a house until he sees that its master is departing from it. Thus also Satan cannot draw near to acquire that house which is our body, until the Spirit of Christ departs from it. 472

Later in the passage, Aphrahat continues, "Satan does not have the knowledge beforehand to know or see when the Spirit will depart, so that he [Satan] may come to rob the man; but he listens and watches, and so seizes." It is interesting to note that Satan is merely an astute observer; he takes advantage of the situation, but he is not the instigator. Aphrahat has a high regard for the free will of humanity to do good and to do evil. The person who was previously the temple of God becomes the temple of Satan because of this great free will.

In *Dem.* Fourteen, Aphrahat describes in graphic detail how a person who is now a temple of Satan thinks and behaves:

The Evil One puts his guards at the doors of [the man's] thought,⁴⁷⁴ and his mind⁴⁷⁵ is disturbed by a multitude of seductions. [...] His heart is like a solid rock [...] He rises and prays as he does every day and he begins and finishes his prayer and he crosses himself. But his heart is not aware of what his lips are saying. He studies the customary teachings with his mouth but his heart is void of all good. He cut off his attention

⁴⁷¹ D 6:17 (PS I/304.10–14)

⁴⁷² D 6:17 (PS I/301.17–20)

⁴⁷³ D 6:17 (PS I/304.6–10)

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⁴⁷⁴ Syr. mahshabteh.

⁴⁷⁵ Syr. misi re yneh.

to the teaching of the Spirit; his intellect wanders to previous foolishness. When his mind remembers [God], he groans within himself, and the Evil One comforts him and fills his heart. [...] His heart is obscured and his intellect is dark. His mind is blinded and he gropes and stumbles.⁴⁷⁶

The final result is that Satan gains an ignorant and blind slave. It is a daunting thought that Satan is capable of filling a person's heart as easily as the Spirit. A key result of Satan's occupation is the obscuring of the person's mind, or intellectual faculty. Not only is the heart hardened, but the mind is blinded. This is directly opposite to how a sage's mind is described by Aphrahat when it has ascended to heaven; the mind is able to see everything, and is not blind in any way. The next chapter of this work deals with this theme in greater detail.

Aphrahat does hold out a faint hope for a person who has become Satan's temple; it may only be temporary. The Spirit may return to the person if the person has repented and cleaned house, so to speak.

Therefore, my friend, the Holy Spirit departs from a man who has received him, but later he [the Spirit] returns and goes with him again. [If] Satan draws near to that man, to cause him to sin, and then the Holy Spirit may abandon him altogether.⁴⁷⁷

The dire consequences of the Spirit abandoning someone forever are seen in Aphrahat's warning that: "Whoever grieves the Spirit of Christ, (Eph 4:30) shall not raise up his head from griefs." If a person continues to

⁴⁷⁶ D 14:43 (PS I/700.10–12;14; 21–25; 701.2–4)

الم (700.10-12) حمير ديع بهاةه من حل المائه المحددة ا

⁴⁷⁷ D 6:17 (PS I/300.25–301.4)

מלך מוא מביב אמול, גומשא נסטושא הבינא הל כן אושא מסברות בי אולא האולם לטולם מינה שם מסוב שלוא בת מם כושא איבוא געונים מולפוסם לם לעמו מש ומטושא

⁴⁷⁸ D 6:1 (PS I/252.12–13). For the Syriac, see page 123.

grieve the Spirit, the person is condemned forever, remaining non-spiritual, constantly sinning, and ultimately becoming merely an animal.

The departure of the Spirit from a Christian leaves the person prey to Satan and no longer a spiritual but merely an animal being. The Pauline description of the last days found in 1 Corinthians 15:35–58 is the chief interpretive lens through which Aphrahat describes what happens to both the devout and the sinful. Aphrahat accepts fully the animal and spiritual dichotomy found in the Pauline text. The sinner is utterly animal, imitating the sinful Adam: a beast, ignorant of God, a dwelling place for Satan, naked, accused, and indicted by the Spirit. The saint, on the other hand, is entirely spiritual: a likeness of Jesus the heavenly Adam, clothed, protected, defended by the Spirit, and a temple of God.⁴⁷⁹

The Holy Spirit is key in the determination of whether or not a person is spiritual or animal, heavenly, or earthly. The Spirit may be either, as it were, a defense lawyer or a prosecuting attorney before the tribunal of the Lord. The Spirit may function as a defense lawyer before God to protect the person who honors the Spirit's indwelling:

And whoever worships the Spirit, and guards it safely in himself in purity, in that day the Holy Spirit shall guard him, and he shall become all of the spirit, and shall not be found naked; as the Apostle said: "Oh would that we could be clothed and not found to be naked." (2 Cor 5:3) 480

The Spirit is not only the defense attorney but also the haberdasher for the spiritual person. The Spirit provides the clothing to protect the person from judgment. A court informant and prosecuting attorney are other functions for the Spirit, depending upon the actions of the person in whom he dwells. "This Spirit goes often and stands before God and beholds his face, and [if anyone] harms the temple in which he dwells, [the Spirit] will accuse him before God."⁴⁸¹ The role of the Spirit is dependent upon the actions of the

 $^{^{479}}$ Cf. D 22:6 (PS I/1001), D 22:9 (PS I/1029) and D 23:11 (PS II/29–33).

⁴⁸⁰ D 6:18 (PS I/308.19–24)

מי, מודא ומשא אולא כבלוב משנבא מומ אלמא משיא פוב מפמי. מיל וגמו למבלא ושוא כמ מבלא בלמים, מומ אלמאי

person in whom the Divine dwells. Thus if the person sins, the Spirit is accusing; if the person is holy, the Spirit is protective.

The Divine clothes the holy person, but the sinful person is found naked in the sight of God. Salvation means being well clad by the Spirit. As Aphrahat explains:

And the man [who] grieves the Spirit of Christ will be in the animal soul in his resurrection because the heavenly Spirit is not in him, so that sensuality⁴⁸² [animal passions] might be swallowed up. But when he shall arise he shall remain in his natural state, naked from the Spirit, because he stripped off from him the Spirit of Christ; he shall be given [over] to the greatest nakedness.⁴⁸³

Aphrahat interprets scripture in terms of grieving the Spirit in a far more categorical manner than later authors. For him, if one grieves the Spirit, He will leave, end of the story. So it is of the utmost importance that all who have the Spirit dwelling within them stay pure and keep the Spirit happy with prayer, right actions, and right thoughts.

Impurity and the means by which to avoid it, is also a concern of two fellow Syrians of Aphrahat's who wrote after his time, Ephrem the Syrian and Macarius. Ephrem uses similar language to the Sage, including that the person may be a temple and that "dung" may despoil the person. For Ephrem, the temple is both the body of the person and sometimes the mind.⁴⁸⁴ The temple imagery is fully fleshed out including the clergy, sacrifice and offering, as Ephrem explains:

⁴⁸² Syr. איים napshānāytā, sensuality can also mean animal passions.

The Holy Spirit's role in this passage is reminiscent of Gabriel's role of bringing the prayers to the heavenly altar, but Gabriel may be characterized as a delivery boy while the Holy Spirit is the prosecuting attorney.

⁴⁸³ D 6:18 (PS I/308.13–19)

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⁴⁸⁴ In Heresies 42:4, Ephrem writes of the body as becoming God's new temple which replaces the Temple on Mt. Zion. Edmund Beck, Hymnen Contra Haereses: Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers, vol. 169 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1957), 169. See Brock's observations about Ephrem's temple imagery in The Luminous Eye, 37 and Hans J. W. Drijvers, "Body and Soul a Perennial Problem," in Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East: Forms and Types of Literary Debates

Let us be builders of our own minds into shrines⁴⁸⁵ suitable for God. If the Lord dwells in your house, honor will come to your door. How much your 'honor' will increase if God dwells within you. Be a temple⁴⁸⁶ for him, even a priest, and serve him within your shrine.⁴⁸⁷ Just as for your sake he became priest, sacrifice, and libation; you, for his sake, become shrine, priest, and sacrificial offering. Since your mind will become a shrine, do not leave any filth in it; do not leave in God's house anything hateful to God. Let us be adorned as God's house, with what is attractive to God. If anger is there, lewdness abides there too; if rage is there, fumes will rise from there. Expel grudges from there, and jealousy, whose reek is abhorrent. Bring in and install love there, as a censer full of fragrant incense. Gather up and take the dung out, odious liaisons and bad habits. Strew good fellowship around it, like blossoms and flowers. But instead of roses and lilies, decorate it with prayers.⁴⁸⁸

This passage has many themes in common with Aphrahat: building, the mind as a temple, the indwelling of God, a holy sanctuary which functions with a priesthood and sacrifice, impure thoughts as dung, cautions against

in Semitic and Related Literatures, eds. Gerrit J. Reinink and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout (Leuven: OLA, 1991), 121–134.

Translated by Sidney Griffith in "A Spiritual Father for the Whole Church: the Universal Appeal of St. Ephraem the Syrian," *Hugoye*, http://www.acade.cua.edu/syrcom/Hugoye/Vol1No2/HV1N2Griffith.html: Vol. 1, No. 2, July 1998, 35.

⁴⁸⁵ Syr. Koä nawsē.

⁴⁸⁶ Syr. عمدل haykal.

⁴⁸⁷ Syr. was nawsek.

⁴⁸⁸ 2nd Sermon "On Reproof" in Edmund Beck, *Sermones I: Des Heiligen Ephraem Des Syrers*, vol. 350 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1970), lines 93–122, page 14.

anger and rage.⁴⁸⁹ Aphrahat presents the dung soiling the person's temple as wrong words, heresy or blasphemy. Of secondary concern for the Sage is wrong action or sins which ruin the indwelling the Spirit. Ephrem writes that the dung are bad habits and adultery. So his emphasis is more on the practical level rather than on wrong speech. However, Ephrem's poem may also serve as a lovely summary of Aphrahat's theology.

Macarius, or Macarius of Egypt, is another important author for our study. He most likely wrote his works originally in Syriac. He too writes of the person as a temple of God and has many concerns about purity. Followers of Christ may become temples, but due to their sinfulness, most people are not worthy of becoming temples of God. Macarius explains this with a parallel between a person being the temple of Satan or the temple of the Holy Spirit. "We have not yet been made 'the temple of God' (1 Cor 3:16) and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, for we are still the temple of idols and the receptacle of evil spirits because of our attachment to the passions."490 Macarius' concern about the polluting effects of the passions is a more Greek philosophical concern, though Aphrahat would agree that any anger, lust, or envy would preclude the Holy Spirit from dwelling within the "passionate" person. 491 A further, more pastoral, passage has a similar description of a dirty (sinful) person as one who has foul smells and dung within. Along the same lines, Aphrahat uses the phrase "dung and mud," and Macarius is very much in harmony with Aphrahat's sentiments.

For human nature itself tends to form a fellowship with the demons and the evil spirits equally as well as with the angels and the Holy Spirit. It is the temple of Satan or the temple of the Holy Spirit. Now, give a look at your mind, brothers. With whom are you in fellowship: the angels or the demons? Whose temple are you, the dwelling place of God or the devil? With what treasure is your heart filled: grace or Satan? Just as a house that has been filled with foul smells and dung, it must be completely cleaned up and put in order and filled with every fragrance and all treas-

 $^{^{489}}$ Aphrahat uses similar references to dung and mud in D 3:2 (PS I/101.18–22). See page 123.

⁴⁹⁰ Homily 25.4, lines 65–67. Dörries, *Die 50 Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, 201–202. Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, 161.

[&]quot;οὔπω γεγόναμεν ναὸς θεοῦ καὶ οἰκητήριον πνεῦματος ἁγίου· ἔτι γάρ ἐσμεν ναὸς εἰδώλων καὶ δοχεῖον πνευμάτων πονηρίας διὰ τὴν ἐπὶ τὰ πάθη ὁρμήν."

⁴⁹¹ See Aphrahat's use of Satan temple, page 126.

ures, so it is that the Holy Spirit may come instead of Satan and may find rest in the souls of Christians.⁴⁹²

Macarius' passage has almost exact parallels with Ephrem's; the dirty temple smells so much that it has to be cleaned up before the pure fragrance of the Holy Spirit may enter. Ephrem writes of prayers as flowers, Macarius does not make clear what the fragrance is but it is likely a reference to incense and/or other sweet smells associated with the temple.

To lose the Spirit means no longer to be the dwelling place of the divine and thus no longer a temple of the Spirit. The Spirit is offended by sinful acts, when the heart becomes so dirty that it is uninhabitable. If this occurs, Satan may inhabit the heart. Satan may only dwell there, if there is a vacancy in an individual's heart left by the Divine vacating the premises, so to speak. Interestingly, in *2 Baruch*, the Jerusalem temple is not only vacated by God, but the enemies are invited in: "Enter, enemies, and come, adversaries, because he who guarded the house has left it." Baruch describes God's abandonment of the Jerusalem temple; Aphrahat interiorizes this in describing how the Spirit abandons the human temple when it is grieved. *2 Baruch* is a second temple Jewish text which deals with temple imagery and

⁴⁹² Homily 27.19, lines 277–286. Dörries, *Die 50 Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, 228–229. Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, 182. See also Homily 15.33, Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, 120. See a very similar passage in Aphrahat with reference to dung and mud, page 123.

[&]quot;ἐπειδὴ αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις κοινωνική ἐστι τῶν διαμόνων καὶ πνευμάτων τῆς πονηρίας, ὁμοίως καὶ ἀγγέλων καὶ πνεύματος ἀγίου· ναός ἐστι τοῦ σατανὰ καὶ ναὸς τοῦ ἁγίού πνεύματος. λοιπὸν ἐπισκέψασθε τὸν νοῦν ἡμῶν, ἀδελφοί, τίνος ἐστὲ κοινωνοί, ἀγγέλων ἤ διαμόνων· τίνος ἐστὲ ναὸς καὶ οἰκητήριον, θεοῦ ἤ διαβόλου· ἡ καρδία ποίου θησαυροῦ μεμέσωται,τῆς χάριτος ἤ τοῦ σατανὰ· ὥσπερ οὖν οἰκίαν μεμεστωμένην δυσωδίας καὶ κοπρίας, χρὴ ταύτην καθαρισθῆναι τὸ ὅλον καὶ κοσμηθῆναι καὶ πληρωθῆναι πάσης εὐωδίας καί θησαυρῶν, ὥστε πνεῦμα ἄγιον ἐλθεῖν ἀντὶ τοῦ σατανὰ καὶ ἐπαναπαῆναι εἰς τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν Χριστιανῶν."

⁴⁹³ 2 Baruch 8.1. The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, or 2 Baruch, is set in the period following the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.E., but it is probably written in reaction to the destruction of the Second temple in 70 C.E. 2 Baruch probably originates from the Palestine region written in Hebrew, dating from approximately 100–120 C.E. The Syriac text survives in a 6th century manuscript, presumably translated from the Greek. A. F. J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," OTP, 1:616. The critical edition is: Apocalypse de Baruch, SC vol. 144 and 145, ed. Pierre Bogaert (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969).

has some remarkable parallels with Aphrahat. Another early Jewish author with some similar ideas to the Sage's is Philo of Alexandria.⁴⁹⁴

Connections between Philo of Alexandria and Aphrahat may seem to be a stretch; nevertheless, I am following the lead of A. Guillaumont who suggests rather strongly that Aphrahat did know of Philo's tradition concerning Moses and his sexual continence. ⁴⁹⁵ In terms of temple imagery, Aphrahat seems to be unaware of Philo's idea of the whole cosmos as a temple. ⁴⁹⁶ However, Philo of Alexandria similarly writes of God leaving the dwelling place of the soul if it is unworthy.

⁴⁹⁴ Philo (20 B.C.E. to 50 C.E.) was an Alexandrian Jew who presented the Hebrew scriptures through a Greek philosophical lens. His writings had a great influence on Origen and many other Christian writers. Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man—Is Woman Included?" *HTR* 72, 3–4 (July-October 1979), 175–206 and Mark Harding, "Josephus and Philo," in *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Mark Kiley (London: Routledge, 1997), 86–91.

⁴⁹⁵ Philo's On the Life of Moses, II, XIV, 68,69. Philo of Alexandria, Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie, vol. 22, De Vita Mosis, eds. Roger Arnaldez, Jean Pouilloux, and Claude Mondésert (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967), 223 and Philo, The Works of Philo, trans. Charles D. Yonge (New York: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 497. Antoine Guillaumont notes the importance of this idea in "Philon et Les Origines du Monachisme," chap. in Philon d'Alexandrie, Lyon, 11–15 Septembre 1966 (Paris: CNRS, 1967; Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1979), 361–373. Guillaumont highlights that Jerome and Epiphanus also mention this exegetical tradition. Aphrahat has a similar idea concerning Moses' purity in D 18:6–7 (PS I/832.1). The Sage argues that virginity is better than marriage and he uses Moses as an example to support his argument because Moses did not have any children for forty years. Because of Moses' continence, Aphrahat writes: "Moses loves holiness, and he was loved by the Holy One, who showed him His Glory." D 18:7 (PS I/832.24–25)

Philo considers the whole cosmos to be the temple of God. The world is God's temple, but even though this is true, people need to have an earthly place where they may ask for forgiveness and offer sacrifices and thanksgiving, so there is also an earthly temple. Since there is only one God, there is only one temple. As he

writes in his text On the Special Laws:

The highest, and in the truest sense the holy, temple of God is, as we must believe, the whole universe, having for its sanctuary the most sacred part of all existence, even heaven, for its votive ornaments the stars, for its priests the angels who are servitors to his powers, unbodied souls, not compounds of rational and irrational natures, as ours are, but with the irrational eliminated, all mind through and through, pure intelligences, in the likeness of the monad.

De specialibus legibus I, XII, 66–67. Philo of Alexandria, The Special Laws, 136–139. Philo of Alexandria, Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie, 48–50.

Since, therefore, he invisibly enters into this region of the soul, let us prepare that place in the best way the case admits of, to be an abode worthy of God; for if we do not, he, without our being aware of it, will quit us and migrate to some other habitation, which shall appear to him to be more excellently provided.⁴⁹⁷

Aphrahat's description of the Spirit leaving a person is very similar to Philo's own portrayal of God's dwelling within the soul. Philo and Aphrahat focus on the interior dwelling of God, whereas Baruch primarily deals with God dwelling in the Jerusalem temple. It may be that Aphrahat did have access to a few of Philo's works or that our Sage is echoing a commonly held Jewish tradition which is also evident in Philo's writings. The latter scenario is the most plausible. Although it is not possible to prove the influence of Second Temple Jewish literature on the Syrian Christian authors, at least it does show that great minds think alike.

Aphrahat has analogous ideas to some earlier Jewish authors and later Syriac Christians have comparable concerns to the Sage. The late fifth to early sixth century Syriac writer Philoxenus of Mabbug deals with the whole question of the Spirit living in a person after He was dwelling within for some time. Aphrahat's view differs significantly from the later author; however, that it is a topic of concern is important. S. Brock contrasts Aphrahat and Philoxenus of Mabbug:

"Τὸ μὲν ἀνωτάτω καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἱερὸν θεοῦ νομίζειν τὸν σύμπαντα χρὴ κόσμον εἶναι, νεὼ μὲν ἔχοντα τὸ ἁγιώτατον τῆς τῶν ἄντων οὐσίας μέρος, οὐρανόν, ἀναθήματα δὲ τοὺς ἀστέρας, ἱερέας δὲ τοὺς ὑποδιακόνους αὐτοῦ τῶν δυνάμεων ἀγγέλους, ἀσωμάτους ψυχάς, οὐ κράματα ἐκ λογικῆς καὶ ἀλόγου φύσεως, οἵας τὰς ἡμετέρας εἶναι συμβέβηκεν, ἀλλ΄ ἐκτετμημένας τὸ ἄλογον, ὅλας δι΄ ὅλων νοεράς, λογισμοὺς ἀκραιφνεῖς, μονάδι ὁμοιουμένας."

⁴⁹⁷ On the Cherubim, Part 2 XXIX (98) Philo of Alexandria, Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie, vol. 3, De Cherubim, eds. Roger Arnaldez, Jean Pouilloux, and Claude Mondésert (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1961), 66. See also Philo, *The Works of Philo*, 90.

"Έπειδη τοίνυν ἀοράτως τόδε τῆς ψυχῆς χωρίον εἰσδύεται, παρασκευάζωμεν τόν τόπον ἐκεῖνον ὡς ἔνεστι κάλλιστον, ἀξιόχρεων ἐνδιαίτημα θεοῦ γενησόμενον. εἰ δὲ μή, λήσεται μεταναστὰς εἰς ἕτερον οἶκον, ὃς ἄν ἄμεινον αὐτῷ δοκῆ δεδημιουργήσθαι."

⁴⁹⁸ Philoxenus of Mabbug, d. 523, is one of the most important Syriac theologians of the fifth to sixth centuries who also dealt with the Chalcedonian christological controversies. See Brock, *Syriac Fathers on Prayer*, 102–133.

'Grieving the Spirit' to both men implies failure to allow the Spirit to work within oneself, in other words failure to co-operate with the Spirit; the resulting absence of the 'fruits of the Spirit' are described by Aphrahat in terms of the Spirit's departure, whereas for Philoxenus the Spirit is still present, but rendered inactive.⁴⁹⁹

If devout ascetics honor the Spirit then they will become temples, but if they commit a grievous enough sin, the Spirit will leave and they will no longer be temples of God. The prospect of the permanent removal of the Spirit from previously blessed adherents is quite unsettling for anyone who is attempting to become a temple of God. This may explain why approximately 150 years later, Philoxenus tempers the tenor of this concept to say that the Spirit is inactive rather than completely absent.⁵⁰⁰

From the warning in Ephesians 4:30 that one must not "grieve the Spirit" we see a great deal has been written about what this means for the Christian believer and what may cause the Spirit to leave a person. Aphrahat writes that wrong words are the main culprit, for example: blasphemy, treachery, anger, and heresy. He also writes that if a person persists in sinning then the Spirit's vacating the person will be permanent. The person has no hope of the Spirit returning. Other authors, both Jewish and Christian have similar ideas about the divine leaving a person. Ephrem the Syrian and Macarius both write of the person as the temple of the Spirit and warn that one should not be a temple of Satan. Ephrem thinks that grieving the

Philoxenus then quotes 1 Cor 3:16 and 1 Cor 6:19–20, and continues, "If then you are temples (מבבלה hayklė) and shrines (מבבלה nawsė) of God because of the Spirit of God dwelling within us, then no sin, by act or by thought, can destroy the temple of God. For sin that is committed by some action is different from the denial of God."

محمل متحله ماهه و مقعه بهاله و المسلم و المسلم

The letter in English is in S. Brock, *Syriac Fathers on Prayer*, 107–108, from the Syriac in Antoine Tanghe, "*Memra* de Philoxéne de Mabboug sur l'inhabitation du Saint Esprit," *Le Muséon*, 73 (1960): 39–71. This Syriac passage is from Tanghe, 43.

⁴⁹⁹ Brock, The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition, 47.

⁵⁰⁰ Philoxenus' letter "On the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit" deals directly with the question of the Spirit leaving and states that the purpose of baptism is "that we should be temples for [God], and that he should dwell within us continually."

מם זייו איתהשעם עלבים שן עסשוי עלע

Spirit involves more practical actions than Aphrahat, that of adultery and rage. Macarius' emphasis is about control of the passions, a very Greek philosophical concern. Philo of Alexandria writes that God may leave the human soul as long as it is unworthy. Philoxenus of Mabbug, a later Syriac author, mitigates Aphrahat hard line on the Spirit leaving a person permanently, to write that the Spirit only leaves temporarily until the person corrects the problems. Aphrahat works within a larger milieu of thought and has his own interpretations on Ephesians 4:30 but he has many different companions who also write about the grieving of the Spirit.

The divine indwelling a person and then leaving is a popular topic for both Jewish and Christian authors. Aphrahat is dealing with a well tread topic, possibly he may be following the lead of earlier authors, Philo, Baruch, and the Odist. He also is of the stream of thought which continued after the Sage leading to Philoxenus. For Aphrahat, the Lord comes in the door entering the inner person, where he dwells in the temple of the heart. The person offers the sacrifice of prayer on the altar of the heart and strives to remain sinless. When a person does sin, then repentance must immediately occur or the Spirit may be grieved and leave. As Ephrem, Aphrahat, and Macarius agree, the resulting stench of sin in the soul must be cleaned through repentance. To guard against the possibility of becoming a beast instead of a spiritual person, one must keep ever vigilant in thought and action. The result of the good acts and refraining from evil is that, after death and when the last judgment occurs, the Spirit will intercede on behalf of the person before Christ and thereby the person will be saved.⁵⁰¹ But even before the last judgment, the Sage, who is a temple of God, is allowed to fulfill the Matthean beatitude—he can see God in this life.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. D 6:15 (PS I/297.8–18).

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4 THE SAGE "MAY" SEE GOD

In Aphrahat's writings, the journey of becoming a divine temple begins with faith in Christ, and proceeds through baptism, eucharist, ascetic dedication, and indwelling by God. The journey ends in the ability to see God with the spiritual eyes of the heart. Within Aphrahat's corpus there are four passages in which the human being has a personal and immediate interaction with the divine, commonly described as "seeing God." These passages may be very generally categorized as ascent texts. They illustrate Aphrahat's close connection with apocalyptic and with Merkabah mystical thought. Aphrahat's temple imagery has deep mystical roots stemming from Merkabah and Hekhalot literature. He is part of the same mystical tradition as a number of Second Temple Jewish texts. There are many currents in this stream, he is but one of them. It would be pure speculation on my part to presume direct influence, although we can see many affinities between the Sage and these various texts. The ascent to the heavens occurs in the following important passages: Dem. 18:4, Dem. 14:35, Dem. 23:59, and Dem. 10:8.

The first named passage found in *Dem.* Eighteen describes God's revelation and Moses' ascent on Mt. Sinai.

Passage #1 - Dem. 18:4 (PS I/828.4–18) Moses went up to Mount Sinai, entered into the cloud, and received the commandment. Moses saw the shining splendor, was afraid, and quaked. Trembling seized him, for he saw the *Shekintā* of the Most High which drew near to the mountain, the great power of the throne of God, to which the myriads and thousands minister, veiling their faces from his shining splendor. They rush and swiftly fly with their wings, calling, sanctifying, and exalting his majesty.⁵⁰² They are watchful, prepared, and swiftly rushing; [they are] adorned, beautiful, excellent, and desirable. They rush, sanctifying, ac-

⁵⁰² Syr. ๙๙๓๖i rabbutā.</sup>

complishing his commandment, ascending and descending in the air, like swift lightning flashes.⁵⁰³

The above is the paradigmatic account of a person ascending to see the Divine within Aphrahat's ascent passages.

The next passage, *Dem.* 14:35, recounts the ascent of an unnamed sage. This Demonstration is addressed to the churches of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and to the wider audience of God's children. This ascent passage is to be read, and possibly even experienced, by everyone who is willing to lead an ascetic life.

Passage #2 - Dem. 14:35 (PS I/661.6-664.7)

Whoever has the door of his heart open acquires it [the treasure of God], and whoever spreads the wings of his intellect⁵⁰⁴ inherits it. It dwells in the diligent man, and it is implanted in the heart of the sage. His nerves are set firmly in their sources, and he gains the hidden treasure. His thought⁵⁰⁵ flies over the heights, and his reflection⁵⁰⁶ descends to the depths. Depicted within his [the sage's] heart are amazing things, and the eyes of his senses perceive the edges of the seas. All created things are enclosed within his thought, and his disposition to receive [more] becomes vast. He [the Sage] is a great temple⁵⁰⁷ for his maker: and the King of the heights comes and dwells in him, raises his intellect to the heights and makes his thought soar to the sanctuary, revealing to him treasures of all sorts. His mind⁵⁰⁸ wanders because of the vision, his

⁵⁰³ D 18:4 (PS I/828.4–18)

⁵⁰⁴ Syr. אביבוא tar iteh.

⁵⁰⁵ Syr. העשבאס ma<u>h</u>shabteh.

⁵⁰⁶ Syr. אינישא marniteh.

⁵⁰⁷ Syr. Lan hayklā.

⁵⁰⁸ Syr. ousi reyaneh.

heart is captivated⁵⁰⁹ by all his senses, and a thing he never knew is revealed to him. He regards it and observes the place, and his mind is awestruck with all that he sees. All the Watchers are eager to minister to him and the Seraphs cry "holy" to his glory, flying with their swift wings, and their white and shining garments, veiling their faces from his shining, rushing more swiftly than the wind.⁵¹⁰

509 Syr. משלפא meshtebā. The Divine captivates the Sage's mind through the enormous magnitude of the vision. Aphrahat uses the term again in D 10:8, "when I saw them my understanding was captivated with the great treasury. And as I looked upon it, it dazzled my eyes, and captivated my thoughts,..." Captivity and its cognates are used almost fifty times throughout the Demonstrations. The vast majority of references are to the Babylonian captivity; (D 2:13, D 4:9, D 5:8-9, D 13:13, D 14:41, D 15:7, D 21:6, D 23:5, 20, 19-20, 64-65) and to Daniel's prayer which released the prisoners from the evil king, Daniel 9:18-20 (See D 3:15, D 14:15, D 19:1, 8,10-11, 13; D 21:18). There are a few interesting exceptions to the common references to the Babylonian captivity, two are noted above with reference to God captivating the Sage's senses. Another reference is to the Jews captivating some Christians with their arguments, so Aphrahat must refute the Jews (D 18:1). Finally, Aphrahat refers to marriage captivating a man's mind with worldly love rather than divine love of virginity (D 18:10). In reference to humility Aphrahat uses captivity in a peculiar sense: "The humble one associates with the proud and the haughty, but he takes captive and controls all of his understanding. Humility pulls down strongholds and overcomes passion and anger." D 9:3 (PS I/412.9-13)

For Aphrahat, humility is a divine gift. This passage from D 9:3 is very similar to those both of D 10:8 and 14:35, in which God takes the devout person's mind prisoner. The faithful and humble person will be captivated by the divine, rather than by the earthly concerns.

⁵¹⁰ D 14:35 (PS I/661.6–664.7)

הפאנת אוב לבת משבע לת: סופים בוב, אובתאת יוא לת. שיא כבי איבא בשיא: סמאנבא בגיא בגר לבת ותבתא בינית משאוון במבה במביא מוצא בתוכת משבאת לביוא משבאת לביוא משבאת לביוא משבאת לביוא משבאת לביוא בינית המשבאת לב ווחדים במבה מודים בינית וועדים בינית בי

The third ascent excerpt uses the plural personal pronouns in the opening sections, implying a communal setting for the singular personal ascent of "a man" in the second half of the passage. This quotation comes from the last and latest of Aphrahat's Demonstrations, Twenty-Three entitled "On the Grape Cluster."

Passage #3 - Dem. 23:59 (PS II/121.8–124.4)

Dem. 23:59 (PS II/121.8–17) And while your name is great and your works magnificent, you have shrunk your majesty⁵¹¹ enough for our tongue. Our mouth becomes sufficient for you and you dwell inside us. You sojourn in the righteous⁵¹² and vast is the place for you [in them]. Your majesty burrows into the little heart, you have made of us temples⁵¹³ wherein your glory dwells. You have called us your temples⁵¹⁴ and your majesty walks in us, as you have previously proclaimed by the mouth of your prophets: "I dwell in you and I walk in you." (Lev 26:12/2 Cor 6:16) You dwell in the men of rest, you sojourn in the humble ...

Dem. 23:59 (PS II/121.23–124.2) All mouths are inadequate, all languages are insufficient. When a man wishes to comprehend you, he waits; likewise, if he reaches out with the mind,⁵¹⁵ it is not enough. If he raises his intellect⁵¹⁶ until it is above the heavens, he is found walking on the earth, and if his thought⁵¹⁷ descends into the depths for a brief moment, he returns to the earth, and his reflection⁵¹⁸ ceases.⁵¹⁹

محد اد عدم ماه در حدید اساحاه اده هی دهد که هده که هده که دری خود که درید ماهد که مداد درید که المداد درید که المداد درید که درید که

⁵¹¹ Syr. **√**\a¬**i** rabbutāk.

⁵¹² Syr. Kaii zaddiqē.

⁵¹³ Syr. مخلع hayklē.

⁵¹⁴ Syr. منهم nawsyk.

⁵¹⁵ Syr. محدد re^eyāneh.

⁵¹⁶ Syr. mae-id tariteh.

⁵¹⁷ Syr. העשבאס ma<u>h</u>shabteh.

⁵¹⁸ Syr. ס**ביב**ש *marniteh*.

⁵¹⁹ D 23:59 (PS II/121.8–17; 121.23–124.4)

The fourth quotation is Aphrahat's own personal ascent to the King's treasury. This is striking for its use of the first person pronouns throughout the short section.

Passage #4 - Dem. 10:8 (PS/I 460.1-6)

The Steward [Jesus Christ]⁵²⁰ brought me into the King's treasury⁵²¹ and revealed to me there many precious things; and when I saw them my understanding⁵²² was captivated with the great treasury. And as I looked upon it, it dazzled my eyes, and captivated my thoughts,⁵²³ and made my reflections⁵²⁴ wander in many ways.⁵²⁵

From these passages, four key themes emerge concerning Aphrahat's views of the human being in relation to the divine and what ascent to the heavenly realm entails for a person. These four themes are:

- (1) The Sage is the person who may ascend to heaven.
- (2) The ascent occurs within the human who has become a temple.
- (3) Seeing God is the goal of the ascent.
- (4) The action of ascent and descent are simultaneous.

The full experience of salvation as human entrance into the divine place is encapsulated within these few ascent passages.

المحمدة حمل مهمل حمل حمدة هيد حسب غنه هيد المدلاد دهمي مهميد دهمي المحمد في المحمد والمحمد المحمد المحمد والمحمد وال

⁵²⁰ For Jesus Christ as the Steward, see also D 10:8 (PS I/464:4–6) "The treasure does not fail, for it is the wisdom of God, and the steward is our Lord Jesus Christ."

برائم کین لیم منفه: محمده ق، کین دیماله، عند حدیک هذا که مدیری محمد محمده

וב בילא אבלה לביל ביל ביל הכלבא מנוסית לכך להבא מביבאא: מבו עול אום אשלכת לה כובת בבוא וכא: מבו עול כה כשו ב ביל משבר בעשבר המפחא ובילא כבוא מביבאא.

⁵²¹ Syr. Ku gazā may mean either treasury or sanctuary in this context.

⁵²² Syr. ► mad āy.

⁵²³ Syr. מעשברל ma<u>h</u>shbātā.

⁵²⁴ Syr. re^cyānē.

⁵²⁵ D 10:8 (PS I/460.1–6)

THEME #1 – THE SAGE

The first theme concerns the fortunate person who is allowed to ascend to the heights, the person who is filled with God's wisdom. ⁵²⁶ The person who is able to ascend is the elite of the elite, the perfect one ⁵²⁷ of the community, the Sage, the wise man, (<u>hakimā</u>). ⁵²⁸ Aphrahat names the person who ascends in *Dem.* 14:35: "It [the treasure of God] is planted in the heart of the sage." ⁵²⁹ The sage is both the garden for God's treasure and God's beloved: "[Love] desires the wise people." ⁵³⁰ In Aphrahat's view, the only truly wise person is one who follows the wisdom of God. One of the scriptural examples of a wise person is Moses. ⁵³¹ *Dem.* 18:4 describes Moses'

bekmātā) in two important ways. The first way refers to the fallible human wisdom which only gets a person in trouble. See D3:10 (PS I/117.2) in reference to Haman's wisdom not being able to save him, referring to Esther 4:6 and D5:7 (PS I/197.4) citing Ezek 18:3. The second and far more common wisdom reference is to the "Wisdom of God" (אמבים אלא hekmatā dalāhā) which is the treasure of God; see page 154. Cf. D 10:8 (PSI/464.9–11). The Wisdom of God is also the fear of God, following Isaiah 11:2 "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." Cf. D 23:67 (PSII/148:8), D 1:9 (PSI/21.5). Aphrahat creates a clear divide between divine wisdom and that of humanity, "Humanity cannot rise up to the wisdom of God, as I have written in the tenth discourse." D 22:26 (PS I/1048.17), Cf. D 23:52 (PS II/101.20). The Holy Spirit as wisdom is described in D 21:2 (PSI/984.6–11) where Aphrahat states that it is the Spirit of Wisdom with which Joseph defended himself to the Pharaoh.

527 Aphrahat uses the term "perfect" (mira) in the opening passages of his first Demonstration. The process of salvation is the journey to perfection, the journey of a person to become a perfect one. The *Liber Graduum* uses the idea of "the perfect ones" as a cornerstone for the whole life of the believing community. Aphrahat functions with the same sort of idea but he does not create the dual system of "perfect" and "just" as the *Liber* does. Cf. D 1:3 (PS I/8:24 ff).

⁵²⁸ H. J. W. Drijver's article "Hellenistic and Oriental Origins" covers many of the key themes associated with the rise of the Holy Man in Christianity. Hans J. W. Drijvers, "Hellenistic and Oriental Origins," in *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1980), 25–36. See also Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, vol. 1, 140, and Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," 1–19.

⁵²⁹ D 14:35 (PS I/661.10).

⁵³⁰ D 14:15 (PS I/604.22) איבע עביגא וער אינער וויער וויער אינער אינע

⁵³¹ Enoch is also a sage; however, Aphrahat does not address Enoch as such, he only writes that Enoch was pleasing to God. See further, page 183.

own ascent experience and we may extrapolate that he too is a sage in Aphrahat's view.⁵³² Aphrahat uses the adjective "wise" in reference to Moses and even calls Moses a god.⁵³³

The sage is the one who becomes the temple of God not only on earth but also in heaven when he ascends there. *Dem.* 14:35 describes the sage who is "a great temple for his maker," who has his mind raised to the heavenly sanctuary in which the divine treasures are shared with him. The sage's heart is captivated and he is awestruck by the glorious sights. As A. Golitzin explains Aphrahat's *Dem.* 14:35:

The latter [sage] becomes 'the Great temple of His Creator,' the *topos theou*, and in consequence the object of the angels' ministry, the locus of eschatological judgement, radiant with the presence within of the Glory—in short, the restored image of God. Heaven and all its company are within, and ascent to the throne on high becomes thus the journey *ad intra*.534

This passage, *Dem.* 14:35 has many verbal similarities to the Moses ascent passage of *Dem.* 18:4.⁵³⁵ The angelic ministers, (myriads and thousands in Moses' vision, the Watchers and Seraphs in the sage's vision) minister to the Divine. In Moses' vision, the angels minister to the throne of God; in the sage's, it is the sage himself to whom they minister. In both visions, the angels swiftly fly on their wings and veil their faces. The verbal similarities are due to the influence of the Isaiah 6:1–3 passage in which Isaiah has his vision of the heavenly temple.⁵³⁶ The Seraphim of Isaiah minister to the

⁵³² D 18:4 (PS I/825.23–828.18) See page 139.

⁵³³ D 10:2 (PS I/448.7–10) "Moses the great, wise pastor, who knew how to lead the flock, taught Joshua the son of Nun, a man full of the spirit, who led the encamped flock, all of Israel."

ביל איז המשא הוב לכתפבה בואי ליינה בילא היינה בואי בילא האשול. בילא הופעא הובי בולא כעולא בות האשול. D 17:3 (PS I/788.16–18) "When God chose Moses His friend and His be-

D 17:3 (PS I/788.16–18) "When God chose Moses His friend and His beloved and made him chief and teacher and priest to his people, he called him God." Calling Moses a God is based upon Exodus 6:1 and Exodus 7:1.

לברת העבת העביבת בו בבינת, הבבונת ושא הבלפיטא הבתיטא לבדת אוא הויתה.

⁵³⁴ Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam," 296–297.

⁵³⁵ It is only in these two passages, D 14:35 and D 18:4 that Aphrahat has these Isaiah descriptions.

⁵³⁶ Isa 6:1–3: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the

heavenly throne, veil their faces, fly swiftly, call, and sanctify. Aphrahat ties the angelic ministry in heaven to the Christians' ministry on earth in *Dem.* 23:61:

For we know that God is one, [we] will confess, worship, praise, exalt, honor, sanctify, and glorify his greatness, through Jesus his Son, our Savior, who chose us for himself and brought us to him.⁵³⁷

So in church, Christians worship God in the same way as the angels do in heaven. The greatest of the Christians, the sages, may also ascend to heaven in spirit and participate in the heavenly liturgy. Those who are sages in Aphrahat's community are the elite and the most wise.

A further example of who may be a sage is Aphrahat himself. His first person account of the ascent experience in *Dem.* 10:8 is a witness to his sobriquet of "The Persian Sage." Aphrahat is labeled a sage by later readers and scholars, but he also considers himself a sage. He addresses the possibility that someone may disagree with his writings with the defense that he is a sage and that he has personal knowledge:

And again, if any one who should find words we have spoken in one way said by another sage in another way, let him not be disturbed, because every man speaks to his hearers according to what he can understand. [...] Let him accept that which pleases him, and if any does not please him, let him not mock the sages, because the word of God is like a pearl that has a beautiful appearance whichever way you turn it.⁵³⁸

Aphrahat is part of a company of sages who speak the word of God, and those who listen are told to consider other wise peoples' words as well. To

seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁵³⁷ D 23:61 (PS II/128.7–12) Full quotation, see page 62.

שש הן היובן העד מס אלמאי ביו שמב בימ פיםם העד לבן למ סמיבן בות ביום ביום ביום ביום ביום ביום ביום לבול מסובן למחודי

⁵³⁸ D 22:26 (PS I/1045.5-10) and D 22:26 (PS I/1048.3-7)

סאר אספר נפרה אפרות בשנה וולן בעו אספרים אמנים בעוד אספרים אינים בעוד אספרים אינים בעוד אספרים אינים בעוד אספרים בעוד אספרים בעוד אספרים בעוד אספרים בעוד ומואס בעל ווין מואס בעל בעל ווין בעל אפרים עוסא שפין אינים למי.

be a sage, one must also study and understand the scriptures. Both Moses and Aphrahat are examples of people who deserve and have received this title of sage. Aphrahat gives further advice about how to determine whether someone is a sage.

Testing is fundamental to being and knowing others as a sage. Aphrahat's instructions for conversations between sages are:

If a sage approaches a wise man and seeks to sit with him, he is attentive to [the wise man] and he tastes his words. If he sees that [the wise man's words] are good and agreeable, knowledgeable and full of understanding, up to this point, he is able to listen and learn from each of [the wise man's] words.⁵³⁹

Conversely, Aphrahat warns that: "There are those who appear innocent, silent, and humble, but their hearts ponder corrupt thoughts." Aphrahat is likely speaking of people of his acquaintance who pray silently and act holy but are neither at heart. Aphrahat asserts that speech comes from the heart and thus, whatever the state of the heart, it is reflected in the speech of the person. So, if one wishes to know whether someone else is a sage, according to Aphrahat, one should have a conversation with the person, through which one may determine true sagacity.

Aphrahat also uses the term "sage" satirically for his polemical opponents, especially his Jewish intellectual sparring partner. Aphrahat calls his Jewish interlocutor the sage of the Jews,⁵⁴² Sage,⁵⁴³ teacher of Israel,⁵⁴⁴ and

⁵³⁹ D 9:12 (PS I/436.13–18)

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⁵⁴² D 21:1 (PS I/932.10) "the sage of the Jews" كالمرابعة المرابعة المراب

 $^{^{543}}$ D 11:1 (PS I/469.23–25) "But show me, Sage, what rulers and people were in Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Isaiah the prophet?"

wise debater of the people.545 The latter title is used in a more sarcastic tone. Aphrahat writes as though he were debating with one person who attacks Christian views on various fronts. According to J. Neusner, "[... Aphrahat] stands practically alone for his interest in the opinions of actual, not imaginary Jewish opponents. Unlike many of the earlier Christian apologists he has taken the trouble to learn what his opponents really say against Christianity."546 The Jewish sage debating partner in the Demonstrations may be a literary construct, but at least in Neusner's estimation, the content of the Jewish arguments are valid Jewish concerns. J. Snaith notes that: "His [Aphrahat's] contact with Jews was therefore on an unofficial, informal basis, and I suspect that the 'Jewish debater' sums up in his person any number of acquaintances."547 The Jewish debater may also represent those of Aphrahat's own community who have converted from Judaism and still understand Christianity in terms with which Aphrahat disagrees. There is not enough evidence from Aphrahat's time to determine what type of Jewish community with which he was dealing. Whether the Jewish Sage represents a real person or not, true Jewish thought of the time or not, is ancillary to Aphrahat's polemical goal. The tone and passion with which he speaks suggests that Aphrahat does have in mind a person with whom he is arguing or at least Aphrahat feels very threatened by the views presented by his Jewish debating partner. In his various demonstrations dealing with the perceived threat from the Jews, Aphrahat writes to his Christian audience to educate them in how to refute the Jewish critique, which could be from those who are non-Christians or Christian converts from Judaism. 548 Aphrahat is combining pedagogy and polemic in his work.

האביא עסני מבינבא אין בורא פראי מינים במינים וברנים! ביניביל איניא וביא ייי

⁵⁴⁴ D 17:9 (PS I/804.18–19) "So now tell me, O wise man, teacher of Israel." אבע אוכו ל, אם ב עבערא שלפנים האשונה בי אוכו ל, אם ב עבערא שלפנים האשונה בי אוכו לי

⁵⁴⁵ D 12:3 (PS I/512.2–4) "Now I ask you, O wise debater of the people, who does not examine the words of the law?" This same title is used in D 15:5 (PS I/744.15)

⁵⁴⁶ Neusner, Aphrahat and Judaism, 244.

⁵⁴⁷ Snaith, "Aphrahat and the Jews," 250.

⁵⁴⁸ Some of the demonstrations are even entitled "Against the Jews[...]" (مصدل عيمة), for example, *Dem.* 18 and 19. *Demonstrations* 10–19, and 21 all deal with debated issues between Aphrahat's community and the Jewish commu-

Another use of the terms wisdom, wise or sagacity is Aphrahat's title for Christ of "Wise Doctor." He also calls "doctor" his fellow ministers (bishops) who can give absolution for sins. He writes in Dem. Seven "On Repentance": "O Doctors, are you disciples of our Wise Doctor?"550 In reference to the Genesis 3 account of Adam and Eve, Aphrahat explains: "But doctors, I [must] remind you of something that is written in the books of our Wise Doctor, that he does not refuse repentance."551 Aphrahat uses the wise doctor imagery within his martial context for spiritual warfare of the Christian. When a person has sinned, there is a wound. The only way to cure this wound is to reveal it and then to have the medicine which will help the healing. The medicine is Jesus who was also wounded at the crucifixion. The wise doctors who follow the Wise Doctor come to the battlefield to patch up the combatants. Confession to a clergy person is healing for the sinful person. The warfare motif is very common in Aphrahat's books—Dem. Five "On the War" is filled with this imagery. 552 The life of a Christian is characterized as a spiritual battle with the forces of evil in which the wounded have the clerics there to bandage them up with absolution after repentance. Christ is the true Sage, or Doctor; his followers may also be sages.

The Sage becomes the epithet for those who go up to heaven, but it also occurs in the more pragmatic sense of someone who is intelligent. Aphrahat sets out a means to test true sagacity and also uses the term for his Jewish conversation partner. The foremost "sage" is Jesus himself who

nity: circumcision, Passover, Sabbath, food laws, the Messiah, virginity and marriage, Israel, persecution, and who are the People of God.

⁵⁴⁹ Ephrem also uses Physician imagery, most usually in reference to Jesus Christ healing our sins. See *Nisibene Hymns* 26.3–7, 27.1, and 24. See Aho Shemunkasho, *Healing in the Theology of Saint Ephrem* (Gorgias Dissertations 1; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004).

 $^{^{550}}$ D 7:2 (PS I/316.10–11) ... עבעבא עבער, יַסָּסָא, האמשל האמשל האמשל הא 551 D 7:8 (PS I/324.5–7)

לבם בין מבמה אינה אמהואא מהמ הבוליב במפורסים, האמש עבעמא: המם לא בלא מיבהואא.

⁵⁵² See the following for discussion of various historical insights gained from Demonstration 5 about Constantine and Shapur II, T. D. Barnes, "Constantine and the Christians of Persia," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 126–136. The prominence of martial motifs is logical given that Aphrahat was living in a time of persecution and war—sadly, nothing much has changed in over sixteen hundred years.

is the Wise Doctor healing his people's sins. Hence, the person who goes up to heaven is a sage within whom Jesus is dwelling.

On the spiritual journey to become a temple and ultimately ascend to the heavenly throne and see God, the person who may participate in the journey is the sage. For Aphrahat, the sage is one who is holy, ascetic, celibate, probably older, and wise. The sage is he who may ascend, but to what place does this man ascend?

THEME #2 – THE TEMPLE

The second theme addressed from these ascent passages is the place where the ascent transpires—the temple. The temple is presented as being both inside the sage and in the heavens. Aphrahat frankly states that the sage is the human temple for the divine in *Dem.* 14:35. "He [the Sage] is a great temple for his Maker: the King of the heights comes and dwells in him, raises his mind to the heights and makes his thoughts soar to the sanctuary, revealing to him treasures of all kinds."553 Later, at the end of his *Demonstrations*, Aphrahat uses a more personal turn of phrase with the repeated use of the second person pronoun "you." "You have called us your temples and your majesty walks in us."554 So at the most personal level of human existence the sage becomes a locus for the divine which opens the door for seeing the heavenly temple. Aphrahat is no innovator with his description of a living person who sees the divine heavenly temple; he follows a well trodden path of mystical thought stemming from the Scriptures.

The Hebrew scriptures depict the physical building of the Jerusalem temple; there are also allusions to the supernal temple within the texts. The Psalms describe Mt. Zion as the holy mountain where God dwells, with the temple being the royal palace of God and Jerusalem his capital, Ps 48. In Ps 11, the Lord's throne is in his heavenly temple. Ps 93 has some mystical elements which resemble the features of *Merkabah* mysticism with apocalyptic overtones: the robed Lord is on the throne and there is thundering water. God's throne is not connected with the Jerusalem temple on earth; it is connected with the heavens.⁵⁵⁵ Ezekiel, Chapter 1, describes the fiery chariot throne in heaven without a detailed description of the temple on earth, but chapter thirty-nine offers the complete blueprints for the temple. The temple is also the setting for Isaiah's prophetic call in which the Lord is on

⁵⁵³ D 14:35 (PS I/661.20) See page 140.

⁵⁵⁴ D 23:59 (PS II/120.14–15) See page 142.

⁵⁵⁵ Timo Eskola, Messiah and the Throne (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 48.

his throne with all the angels flying around. Isaiah 66 opens with the rhetorical question posed by the Lord: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?" These are a few of the key scriptural passages wherein the heavenly temple and throne are portrayed—they all factor into later mysticism both for some Jews and Christians, especially Aphrahat.

Within any temple there needs to be a throne—we have many references to the heavenly throne within the scriptures; one of the more prominent references is Isaiah 66:1. In this passage the Lord poses the question, "What is my place of rest?" If Aphrahat were to answer the question directly, he would say that the Lord's place of rest is the temple. God is too large for the earthly temple; his throne is in heaven. 556 The "place of rest" includes the heavenly realm and is not static or limited only to one locale. The Sage describes the place of rest for God as both heavenly and within the person in his long semi-liturgical excursus in *Dem.* 23:59. He uses Isaiah 66:1–2 as a framework for his description culminating in the Divine Glory dwelling in the human temple. He writes:

You have measured the dust of the earth in the palm of your hand (Isa 40:12); the heavens are your throne (Isa 66:1), but they do not contain you. And while your name is great and your works magnificent, you have shrunk your majesty enough for our tongue. Our mouth becomes sufficient for you and you dwell inside us. You sojourn in the righteous⁵⁵⁷ and vast is the place for you [in them]. Your majesty burrows into the little heart, you have made of us temples wherein your glory dwells.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁸ D 23:59 (PS II/121:6–13)

neth croin sein inian racin coisan: ob coucie ho. oct ic sen oiores ecien meth control coucie by sale coisan by nain. outer icodo clen lasin. outer icodo clen lasin. outer icodo clen lasin.

⁵⁵⁶ See also page 117. Macarius also uses "rest" to mean eternal life with God, "The Spirit of the Lord also becomes the rest of worthy souls and their joy and delight and eternal life." Homily 4.12, Pseudo-Macarius, The Fifty Spiritual Homilies, 55. "τὸ πνεθμα τοθ κυρίου, γιγνόμενον εἰς ἀνάπαυσιν τῶν ἀξίων ψυχῶν καὶ ἀγαλλίασιν καὶ τρυφὴν καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον." Homily 4.12. Dörries, Die 50 Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios, 36.

⁵⁵⁷ Syr. 🖎 🗓 zaddiqē.

Aphrahat interweaves eucharistic, incarnational, and temple imagery together in his prayerful passage. To fully appreciate this paragraph we must recall that Aphrahat uses Scripture as sign posts along a journey; he quotes a part of a verse and assumes that his audience can fill in the rest of the passage for themselves.⁵⁵⁹ Thus, Aphrahat writes "the heavens are your throne" and he knows that his audience will fill in the point of the question "What is to be the place of my rest?" The Sage's answer to the question in Isa 66:1 is that the righteous people have the place of rest inside and they are temples of his glory. Isa 66:2 fits into the background for the second part of this passage:

All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the Lord. But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

Even though Isa 66:2 is not directly quoted in the *Dem.* 23:59 section it still follows within the context that only the humble may become temples in whom God dwells. It is through this indwelling that the humble sage may see and even describe the heavenly temple.

The sage who is the temple of God is able to ascend to the heavenly temple and actually see what is happening. When we encounter Aphrahat's portrayal of the heavenly temple, the overwhelming sense we get is that it is a very busy place. The angels are flying around very quickly, and the thoughts of the sage intermingle with all the flapping wings that are part of the great worship of God.⁵⁶⁰ Aphrahat describes the sage's intellect as being aerobatic along the lines of the angels themselves, "His intellect flies over all the heights."⁵⁶¹ As R. Murray explains: "Aphrahat's 'wise man' is rapt to

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⁵⁵⁹ For Aphrahat's exegesis of scripture see: Owens, *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*; Taylor, "Paul and the Persian Sage," 312–331; and Baarda, *The Gospel Quotations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*.

⁵⁶⁰ D 14:35 (PS I/661.6) "Whoever has the door of the heart open finds it [treasure of God], and whoever unfolds the wings of his intellect inherits it."

⁵⁶¹ D 14:35 (PS I/661.19) Ephrem also describes the intellect flying up to see the heavens in his *Hymns on Paradise* 1.3: "My tongue read the story's outward narrative, while my intellect took wing and soared upward in awe as it perceived the splendor of Paradise—not indeed as it really is, but insofar as humanity is granted to comprehend it." See Éphrem de Nisibe, *Hymnes Sur le Paradis*, SC vol. 137, ed. René Lavenant (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1968), 54.

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the heavenly *hekal* [temple] and to the company of Watchers and other angels who render him honour: the same words are used to describe first their winged flight and then his mental experiences."⁵⁶² In *Dem.* 18:4 when Aphrahat describes Moses' ascent of the mountain, the Watchers, or the angels, are alert and swiftly flying around the throne of God.

Trembling seized him, for he saw the *Shekintā*⁵⁶³ of the Most High which drew near to the mountain, the great power of the throne of God, to which the myriads and thousands minister, veiling their faces

Another common term used amongst Aphrahat's different ascent passages is "captive" (meshteba). Aphrahat writes when he saw the treasure of God "it dazzled my eyes, and took captive my thoughts." D 10:8 (PS I/4–6) This same combination of thoughts being imprisoned and of being dumbfounded is described in D 14:35 (PS I/664): "His thoughts are attracted by the vision, his heart is captive by all his senses. He showed to him that which he did not know, he regards it and [664.1] considers the place, his thought is filled with wonder of all that he sees." The sage's thought is enwrapped and enraptured by the glory of God.

⁵⁶² Murray, "Some themes and problems of early Syriac angelology," 151.

The definition of *Shekinah*, in Hebrew *shkn*, is to live or dwell. The secondary meaning is to be stopped or fixed. (Séd, 1988, 233) Aphrahat uses *Shekintā* (محمده) most often in reference to Moses' journey, for example: "What are we to say about the power of Moses' prayer, that there is no end to it? For his prayer delivered him from the hands of Pharaoh, and it revealed to him the *Shekinah* of his God." D 4:7 (PS I/149.25–152.2) Exodus 3:2.

מאחלים ... האמים של היא השלא השלא האחלים האחלים האמים בי האמים בי אונה בי אונה בי אונה אונה בי אונה אונה בי א

mountain of the Jebusites where the Shekintā (אבעראבי) would dwell."

הבו עו המשא ברוש אידא החו בלינוא ויביטמא אוני ויועב איניא שביניא וייביא איז איז איזי איזי בייא שביניא איזי איזי

In D 19:4, Aphrahat writes of the "Shekintā of the Holy One" when recounting King Uzziah and his leprosy in Lev 13:45 and Zech. 14:5. "Because he wanted to rob the priesthood, a leprosy went out from before the Shekintā of the Holy One (**\subsetention shekinta daqdishā*) and struck him between the eyes, and he dwelled in the house in secret, for he was confused all the days."

D 19:4 (PS I/857.5–9)

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For a secondary resource about the Syrians and the *Shekinah* see Nicholas Séd, "La *Shekhinta* et ses amis 'araméens," chap. in *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont* (Geneva: P. Cramer, 1988), 233–242.

from his shining splendor. They rush and swiftly fly with their wings, calling, sanctifying, and exalting his majesty.⁵⁶⁴

The description of the unnamed sage's ascent in *Dem.* 14:35 is almost exactly the same as the previous quotation, with wings moving swiftly and angels covering their faces.

The Watchers hasten to serve him and the Seraphs cry "holy" to his glory, flying with their swift wings, their garments white and resplendent, veiling their faces from his splendour, rushing swifter than the wind.⁵⁶⁵

In the *Dem.* 14 passage, the sage becomes even greater than Moses. Moses is able to observe the angels' service in heaven, but the sage, who *is* the temple for his Maker, is himself served by the angels. The Isaiah 6:3 account in which Isaiah saw the supernal throne with the seraphim and cherubim flying and glorifying is combined with other throne passages to create Aphrahat's frenetic presentation of the angels together with the thoughts of the sage combining to praise God.⁵⁶⁶ One may rather simplistically characterize Aphrahat's presentation of the heavenly temple as being the "Grand Central Station" of the heavenly realm with all the frantic activity of the many flying ministers around the throne.

The sage who ascends to the heavenly temple has a side benefit of being able to see and receive the heavenly treasure (simta). Three of the passages use treasure or treasury imagery to describe what is revealed to the person, excluding the Moses passage. Yet the commandments are a sort of divine treasure and thus all four ascent passages involve a representation of treasure. The emphasis upon treasure within the context of temple im-

⁵⁶⁵ D 14:35 (PS I/664.1–7). According to Halperin, the wings and general swiftness of the angels around the throne can be traced to the LXX where there is more use of "swift" than in the other versions of the Hebrew scriptures. (Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot*, 60). After my own search, I could not find any scriptural versions which have the same emphasis upon speed and swiftness of the angelic ministers around the throne as has Aphrahat.

⁵⁶⁴ D 18:4 (PS I/828:8–20) See page 139.

⁵⁶⁶ Isa 6:1–3: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

agery is because most temples traditionally have a store house where the treasures are kept.⁵⁶⁷

Aphrahat uses a metaphor of physical treasure to represent divine and spiritual treasure. Matt 6:19–20 is key for Aphrahat's understanding of God's treasure; the emphasis is upon the spiritual realm rather than the mundane fiscal realm.⁵⁶⁸ Aphrahat follows the Gospel's admonition concerning treasure to the letter. As he writes: "They [the sons of peace] send their treasures to the place where there is no fear, the place where there is no moth, and no thieves."⁵⁶⁹ This treasure is not money; it is helping the poor, and it is also the heart or mind located in heaven.⁵⁷⁰ Aphrahat is set-

⁵⁶⁷ Solomon's temple had a treasury attached to it. "As a financial center, the Temple had a significant treasury which the kings tapped when forced to pay tribute to foreign victors. (Cf. 1 Kgs 14:25–26, 2 Kgs 14:8–14). ... The galleries or storerooms, standing three stories high and surrounding the Temple on three sides (1 Kgs 6:5–6), were used for storing weapons, cult objects, gifts, and booty." Freedman, ed. *ABD*, s.v. "Temple, Jerusalem."

The LG Mēmrā Six uses the analogy of a royal treasure chest which stores the jewels of the Perfect ones virtues until the Perfect are like angels and finally perfected. See Kitchen, *The Book of Steps*, xxxi, 61–63.

Ephrem also uses treasure imagery throughout his works, most particularly in his *Hymn on the Nativity* 1.20 "From Your treasury, my Lord, let us fetch from the treasures of Your scriptures the names of the just of old who waited (**Scale)** to see Your coming (Mt 13.17)," Beck, *Hymnen de Nativitate*, 3.

⁵⁶⁸ Matt 6:19–20 "Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal."

⁵⁶⁹ D 22:9 (PS I/1009.16–17)

ושים שיבוף ביבא: וכא גאול ופאני טואכשם.

Aphrahat uses Matt 6:20 within the context of helping the poor, which becomes a treasure in heaven. D 14:16 (PS I/612.15–16) "Those stewards of the poor spread their riches, and their treasures are sent to the place that is before them."

המפונים, משבלא נפועה בשנתה השנמלתה נינוים לאליא המנגעתה.

In D 20:16 (PS I/921.2-5) Aphrahat quotes Matt 6:19-21 within the context of alms for the poor.

ting up yet another dual action image of the treasure being both "up" in heaven and "down" in the human heart.

One of Aphrahat's most common descriptions of the place where the divine treasures are to be kept is the heart. A person who is humble and good has good treasures inside the heart. If the person is evil, then there are only evil things in the heart. The heart is the staging point from which thoughts, speech and actions start. Aphrahat expands upon Matt 7:17–18 and the fruit tree analogy in the following: "The secret chambers of his heart are full of good treasures, and his tongue brings forth sweet fruits." 571 So if the person is being a good treasury for God and guarding the gifts of God well within the heart, then good words come out of the person.

The treasure is located both in heaven and within the heart; what is this divine treasure exactly? There are many answers to this question. The first answer is that the treasure is Christ himself. As Aphrahat describes Christ after the crucifixion: "He has been buried within the earth as a treasure buried in a field."⁵⁷² A second answer is that one of the treasures is fasting: "Pure fasting is precious before God, and is guarded as a treasure in heaven."⁵⁷³ A third possibility is that the divine treasure is God's love: "Love is the precious sign, the excellent pearl, and the treasure. The sign of all is love."⁵⁷⁴ Treasure is also the wisdom of God: "For the treasure does not fail, for it is the wisdom of God; and the steward is our Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁷⁵ Following in this vein, Aphrahat defines divine wisdom as fear of God and implies that this is also the treasure given to some.

مقله لحم حتب مستطى المحملة العبيرة محملي حقيدى. محملة العبيرة محملة العبيرة معندى. 572 D 2:20 (PS I/93.3-4) this is alluding to Matt 13:44 ff.

See too D 14:39 (PS I/681.10–14). Aphrahat presents Jesus as the pearl of great price, and we Christians are the merchants in search of him. "For indeed, he [Jesus Christ] is the good pearl and we are the merchants who sell our possessions and buy it. He is the treasure of the field; when we have found it, we rejoice and possess it."

⁵⁷¹ D 9:13 (PS I/437.18–20)

מססס ביי פיין אבלאה סען אבואה איי פובע מען אבואה מסט ביי אשבעניים, עני ביי אשבעניים, עניך ביי אשבעניים, עניך ביי אשבעניים, $2.1.75 \times 1.3 \times 1.3$

⁵⁷⁵ D 10:8 (PS I/463.4.6) for the full quotation see page 143.

For us, our treasure is in the place of promise, and the place of our treasure will be our thought.⁵⁷⁶ There is nothing greater than the fear of God and the man who keeps the commandments is glorified. For many people are called sages, but there is no wisdom like the fear of God.⁵⁷⁷

Aphrahat tells his audience that their thoughts need to be in heaven, that they must fear God. The greatest wisdom is to fear God, and not anything that this world considers to be wise.⁵⁷⁸

The person who can see the divine treasure gains the knowledge which is the fear of God and information which then needs to be communicated back to those who have not yet ascended. Aphrahat states in *Dem.* 10:8: "For a person who comes to the fear of God is like a person who is thirsty, comes to the water spring, drinks and is full and the spring is not a bit diminished." There is a semi-eucharistic tone in so far as the fear of God is compared to drinking from a fountain. One gains the fear of God by reading the scriptures, but there is an associated idea that receiving the eucharist also gives the person the fear of God. The divine treasure given

⁵⁷⁶ Syr. בעשבה *ma<u>h</u>shabtan*.

⁵⁷⁷ D 23:67 (PS II/148.3–8) Matt 6:21.

⁵⁷⁹ D 10:8 (PS I/460.19–22)

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⁵⁸⁰ Aphrahat explains the importance of scripture reading: "It is especially in the pure heart to fear God, who gave the sacred verses to us and set before us a journey in great labor and great fear by the narrow door and fine path, fearing God" D 23:1 (PS II/4:6–11)

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by God to people is described by Aphrahat as various inclusive and overlapping possibilities: Christ, fasting, love, and, the wisdom of God.

The connection between the eucharist and the divine treasure is seen most clearly in Dem. 10:8. The term for the treasury is we gazā, and according to Payne-Smith, it serves also as a metaphor for the eucharist or consecrated bread.581 The phrase in this passage is with beyt gazā which means treasury or sanctuary.⁵⁸² So following the metaphorical definition of treasure then, it may be suggested that Aphrahat's spiritual ascent occurs within the liturgical setting of the eucharist. Aphrahat mentions in the previous section: "Let the priests who distribute from the altar minister honorably."583 This setting for his mystical experience is logical if one agrees that Aphrahat was at least some type of cleric, possibly even a bishop. Given this function within the Syriac church, celebrating the eucharist would be one of his duties and therefore his vision may well have occurred within the church while he was celebrating the eucharist.⁵⁸⁴ Aphrahat's own guide in the Dem. 10:8 vision is Jesus Christ, who shows Aphrahat the heavenly treasure.⁵⁸⁵ Jesus fulfills the same role as Enoch's angelic guides of 1 Enoch. 586 In any case, even though the ecclesiastical locale is strongly suggested, the vision is still within Aphrahat's mind rather than focused upon some physical building on earth.

The images of treasury and offering are also combined in the following passage: "Let us prepare as offerings for the King desirable fruits, fasting and prayer. Let us guard his pledge⁵⁸⁷ in purity, that he may trust us over all

⁵⁸¹ Payne-Smith, 67 "to hide, m. treasure or treasury. Metaph. the eucharist or the consecrated bread."

⁵⁸² Payne-Smith, 43 "a treasury; the sanctuary of a church; E-Syr., a recess in the north wall of the sanctuary.

⁵⁸³ D 10:6 (PS I/457:6–9)

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⁵⁸⁴ See Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men," 152–153 for a discussion of many different examples of ascent occurring during the celebration of the eucharist.

⁵⁸⁵ D 10:8 (PS I/460.1–2) "The Steward [Jesus Christ] brought me into the King's treasury and revealed to me there many precious things[...]" Syriac on page 143.

⁵⁸⁶ See *1 Enoch*, page 168.

⁵⁸⁷ Syr. ταλουσί rahbuneh may also be translated as earnest money, from the Greek root ἀρραβών. Payne-Smith, 531.

his treasury."⁵⁸⁸ Sacrifices in the Hebrew scriptures occur most usually within the temple, and in this case, there may be another subtle suggestion that the setting is a church where the person is praying and offering the eucharist or sacrifice.⁵⁸⁹

The second theme we addressed in the collection of ascent passages is the setting, which is the temple where there is also a treasure storehouse. The divine treasure stored in the adept's heart is Christ, the fear of God, and wisdom. These visions likely occurred within the context of celebrating the eucharist in a church building. So a congruence of three temples is present: the Sage as temple, who is celebrating within the physical building of a church or temple and thereby participating in what is happening in the heavenly temple. The three fold temple imagery is also present in the *Liber Graduum* (LG), another Syrian Christian text.

References to the church appear throughout the *Liber Graduum*, the highest concentration is in LG 12 "On the Hidden and Public Ministry of the Church." ⁵⁹⁰ But the term *hayklā* or temple only occurs nine times in the LG. ⁵⁹¹ The LG uses the terms "temple" and "church" interchangeably in *Mēmrā* 12:1–2 referring to the "public temple" and later to the "public church." This terminological imprecision causes some interpretive vagueness, but the main message is not lost: the individual person may be transformed into a temple within the visible church community.

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⁵⁸⁸ D 6:1 (PS I/245.19–22)

⁵⁸⁹ Prayer is not the only sacrifice to be offered to God. R. Darling Young argues that martyrdom is a redemptive sacrifice to be offered by the spiritual temples of Christ's followers. See Robin Darling Young, *In Procession Before the Word: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity*, Père Marquette Lecture in Theology (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001), 12.

⁵⁹⁰ C. Stewart observes that "The affinities between the Greek Ps.-Macarian texts and the Syriac world of the *Liber Graduum* are striking indeed." Stewart, *Working*, 220. See parallels of *Mēmrē* 12 with Macarian homilies 1 52.2. 1. For other comments about *Mēmrē* 12 see also Murray, *Symbols of Church*, 142–143.

⁵⁹¹ Seven of the nine *hayklā* citations are in LG 12:288.4, 7, 289.18, 292.11, 293.4, and 301.18. The other two references are in LG 22:633.9 and 680.19. Both of these references are to offering sacrifices in the temple as recompense for dishonoring one's parents, Mark 7:11 and Matt 15:4.

In the LG, the person's life is a process through which one progresses from one temple to the other.⁵⁹² The person must start the journey in the visible church through the sacraments,⁵⁹³ then the person becomes a human temple of the Spirit, and finally, if everything works correctly, the person may ascend to the heavenly temple and see God. As the LG author writes:

When we know that the body becomes the secret temple⁵⁹⁴ and the heart the secret altar for spiritual worship, let us be painstaking in this public altar and before this public temple, so that although we are tired in these [things] we shall rest for ever in that great free and heavenly church, and in that altar which is decorated and offered up by the Spirit, before which the angels and all the holy ones⁵⁹⁵ minister and Jesus serves [as priest] and offers up [sacrifice] before them, and above them and on every side.⁵⁹⁶

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See also LG 6:2 c. 144:10–14 "Then our Lord will come and take him from all of this world, as he led his mind and brought it into Paradise, and there will be his habitation in Jerusalem on high." Heavenly Jerusalem also suggests the idea of the Jerusalem temple and all the ideas associated with it.

⁵⁹² The progress through the temple stages is reminiscent of the heavenly ascent journeys found in *Merkabah* mysticism. See discussion of apocalyptic and *Merkabah* literature, page 25. Cf. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 14–16.

⁵⁹³ "For this church gives birth to children with its altar and baptism, and they suckle milk until [they are] weaned. Then they are educated with the understanding of the body and the heart, making their bodies temples and their hearts altars, eating strengthening food and far more excellent than milk until they are perfect and eating our Lord in truth." LG 12:3 c.292:26–293:7

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⁵⁹⁴ Syr. محلك hayklā.

⁵⁹⁵ Syr. 🗫 🗓 qaddishē.

⁵⁹⁶ LG 12:1 c.288:3–13

The heavenly realm and the visible public temple coalesce within the human temple because of the work of the Spirit and Christ. The temple exists at the personal, public and heavenly levels of existence.⁵⁹⁷ It is described as:

The true church and blessed mother who raises all the children and the body and heart in which our Lord dwells, because the spirit of truth resides in it, the true temple and altar,⁵⁹⁸ because our Lord dwells there, as it is written, "your bodies are temples of the Lord and Christ dwells in your inner man." (1 Cor 6:19)⁵⁹⁹

The human temples are the temples both of the Holy Spirit and of Jesus Christ. There are three temples which the LG author describes: the first is the public temple on earth with sacraments and clerics, and the second is the "little" temple of the heart.⁶⁰⁰ The last and most important place is the heavenly church which is "on high" (1). Those who may reach the point of being the temple of God are the Perfect of the LG community.

Aphrahat and the author of the LG use the temple image in remarkably similar ways. Both use the three levels of temple symbolism:

"But when the Paraclete (random paraqlita) comes, a person learns the whole truth. And when he learns the whole truth, then fear is little by little taken completely away from him; then he is freed. And when he is freed, then he will be perfect. And when instrument is perfected and he is fashioned [in] its image, he grows day by day in love working to the day when our Lord desires to lead unto him. Then his dwelling is with him who is our God." (LG 5:19 c.136:4–13) The indwelling of the divine is later defined as becoming the temple of God.

حیدلام می رحنانم ممحم داردلام بی هنادیم حلامه عادیم معنام مدند ملک می مدند محل نامیم برا المحال محدد المحدد المحال مدادم محدد المحال المحدد ا

See also Aphrahat's use of 'inner person,' page 107. Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men," 146.

⁵⁹⁸ Syr. hayklā.

⁵⁹⁹ LG 12:2 c.292:6–13

heaven, earth, and human heart. The LG even tells of the reward for the blessed as the ability to see God, as does Aphrahat. The differences between the two texts are relatively minor: Aphrahat's defense of the visible church is anemic compared to the vociferous defense of the LG and those who are the elite ascetics of both communities have some differences in how they realize their Christian callings. Another Syrian Christian author of more renown than Aphrahat or the LG is Ephrem the Syrian, who also wrote about the temple both as person and as the structure on earth and in heaven.

The first, and most obvious, use of temple is the Jerusalem temple. Ephrem refers to Jesus' presentation in the temple, the cleaning of it, and the temptation by Satan on top of it.⁶⁰¹ Satan even has his own temples which are overthrown by Christ's temple, as Ephrem writes: "Since he [Satan] stood You up on the top of the temple,⁶⁰² You have overthrown the top of his temples." Ephrem also employs the temple as a synonym for the Christian church as he writes of the sack of Nisibis: "He shut us in that we might gather together in his temple." Ephrem draws on temple imagery to describe the physical building in Jerusalem and the Christian churches as well as to refer to Satan's temples. It is unclear whether Ephrem is referring to those people who follow Satan as temples or to pagan temple buildings.

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⁶⁰¹ For references to Jesus' presentation in the temple, see Hymns on the Nativity 6.12, and 18.16, and Homily on Our Lord, Section 53. The cleaning of the Temple is alluded to in the Hymn on Virginity 37.8. Christ's temptation by Satan is in Hymn on Virginity 14.12 and 32.6, also Nisibene Hymns 35.16. The critical editions are: Edmund Beck, Hymnen de Nativitate, 53, 94; idem, Sermo de Domino Nostro: des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers, vol. 270 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1966), 50; idem, Hymnen de Virginitate: des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers, vol. 223. (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1962), 99, 117, 47; and idem, Carmina Nisibena: des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers, part 2 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1962), 6. See also François Graffin, ed., Éphrem de Nisibe: Hymnes Sur la Nativité, SC vol. 459 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2001).

⁶⁰² Matt 4:5.

 $^{^{603}}$ Hymn on Virginity 13.10. Beck, de Virginitate, 46.

האסטבא בל נסכא המיבלא מעפאנת, למס נסכא המיבלה A similar sentiment is in the Nisibene Hymns 53.16, see Beck, Carmina Nisibena, 74.

⁶⁰⁴ Nisibene Hymn 2.9. Beck, Carmina Nisibena, vol. 1. 8.

Ephrem exploits the term temple in a more metaphorical and metaphysical sense for a person who has been baptized, purified and is a dwelling for God. He describes this process in such a poetic manner that it even suggests possible *Merkabali*⁶⁰⁵ mystical overtones to the passage:

Our Lord has renewed your 'oldness' in baptism: he is the Carpenter of salvation, who has fashioned with his own blood, and he built himself a

⁶⁰⁵ Ephrem refers to chariots ascending to the heavens on numerous occasions, "The living who fly up in their chariots will sing glory with their harps." *Hymn on Virginity* 27.6 Beck, *de Virginitate*, 101.

See also Hymn on Paradise 1.7 "The clouds, their chariots fly through the air; each of them has become the leader of those he has taught (Cf. Dan 2:3); his char-

iot corresponds to his labors, his glory corresponds to his followers." Edmund Beck, *Hymnen de Paradiso: Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers*, vol. 174. (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1957), 2.

ziv i cocino e eiu, ce o mi rur ur ecir ism lalur. rollar.

Hymn on Paradise 6.23 "One of them cut through the air with his chariot; (Elijah, 2 Kings 2:11) the Watchers rejoiced as they met him, seeing that a body had lately taken up its abode among them; and just as an earthly being ascended in a chariot and put on splendor, so did the Lord, in His grace, descend and put on a body; He then mounted a cloud and ascended to reign over high and low." Beck, Hymnen de Paradiso, 24.

Translated by Brock, in Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, 80, 117. Critical Edition: Éphrem de Nisibe, *Hymnes Sur le Paradis*, SC vol. 137, ed. René Lavenant (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1968), 38.

Aphrahat uses the same term as Ephrem for chariot, that is, which means mount or horse as well as chariot, instead of which means fageltā chariot, see D 6:1 (PS I/249.5–6) cited on page 183.

The connection between Ephrem and *Merkabah* mysticism is not far-fetched. Several scholars have noted the similarities between Ephrem's writings and those of the Targums, Haggadah, and general common symbolic imagery. See Paul Feghali, "Influence des Targums sur la Pensée Exégétique d'Éphrem?," *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, *OCA* vol. 229, eds. Hans J. W. Drijvers and René Lavenant (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), 71–82; Drijvers, "Jews and Christians at Edessa," 101; and Nicholas Séd, "Les Hymnes Sur le Paradis de Saint Éphrem et Les Traditions Juives," *Le Muséon* 81 (1968): 455–501.

temple⁶⁰⁶ to dwell in. Do not let the 'old man' dwell in his stead in that temple he has built. O body, if you allow God to dwell in your temple, you too will become his royal palace [temple].⁶⁰⁷

Ephrem makes a distinction in this passage between *nawsā* and *hayklā*, though both terms can mean temple. Furthermore, Genesis 1:26 is connected with temple imagery in one of Ephrem's texts: "Since our King [Christ] is exalted, his images [humans] are in his temples and his images are among his possessions." The poet Ephrem presents an encapsulation of temple anthropology which includes all the important ideas: baptism, indwelling, Jesus as temple, Satan possibly dwelling instead, and the body as royal palace. His artistry allows for a more condensed temple theology than Aphrahat's own presentation.

606 Three of the four terms for temple in this quotation use *nawsā* instead of *hayklā*. Syr. Row *nawsā*.

607 Syr. صحل haykal. Hymn on Virginity 1.2; Beck, Hymnen de Virginitate, 1. See also Hymn on the Epiphany 3.9; Beck, Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphiania), 148.

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608 Hymn on Virginity 28.6 Beck, Hymnen de Virginitate, 103.

המבש הסה במיבאסה, המבלסה, במיבלסה, המניבאסה הס במיבאסה. Gog Ephrem also addresses a question about how people may be temples for God and at the same time have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them in his Commentary on the Diatessaron:

He said, "You are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you." (1 Cor 3:16) If we are the temple, how can we be the dwelling of the Spirit? What he has said clarifies this, "You are the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you." (1 Cor 6:19) Furthermore in the Acts of the Apostles he says, "Because it pleased you to tempt the Spirit of our Lord" (Acts 5:9) and "You have not lied to people but to God" (Acts 5:4). Therefore the Spirit is God, because he is from God. The name of God dwells with people, for some are called gods. (Last Supper Discourse, XIX:15. Carmel McCarthy, Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron, Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 289–290; and Louis Leloir, ed. Éphrem de Nisibe, Commentaire de l'Évangile Corcondant ou Diatessaron SC vol. 121 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1966), 340.)

Aphrahat explains this confusion over 1 Cor 3:16 in a similar manner, but he uses more Hebrew scriptural supports rather than taking from the Book of Acts as Ephrem does. R. Murray summarizes Ephrem's use of the Temple image as being primarily for the human body in which the Holy Spirit dwells, namely Jesus Christ's

The temple structure is an important element in Hebrew Scriptures. Isaiah 66 being a particularly relevant passage for Aphrahat's own description of the heavenly throne and temple. The temple image runs through most of Aphrahat's writings as well as through those of the Liber Graduum and Ephrem's Hymns. The temple is a physical constructed building here on earth; it is the supernal temple in heaven; and it is the dwelling place of God within the devout. An especially devout person may even transcend the earthly realm and see the heavenly temple without first dying. The LG author is very concerned about the physical functioning of the church or temple on earth, whereas Aphrahat is more concerned about the inner temple of the person. Ephrem emphasizes the means by which one may become a divine temple, through baptism, but it is not without hazards— Satan may dwell within instead of the Holy Spirit. Aphrahat also warns against assuming one may always be a divine temple; however, if one is then there is the possibility of seeing God enthroned in His heavenly temple. It is to the latter phase of observing the workings of the heavenly temple, or seeing God, to which we now turn. Aphrahat states that he, an unnamed Sage, and Moses have seen God.

THEME #3 - TO SEE GOD

We now turn to the third theme, which is the ability to see God; this is a tangible benefit to becoming a divine temple. "Seeing God" is usually described as a journey up to the heavens which culminates with a vision of the divine throne. This journey is typically defined as an "ascent" from earth to the heavens. There is a long literary tradition of ascent accounts from which follows Aphrahat's personal ascent experience and other descriptions. To remind us of Aphrahat's own words two of the important passages are repeated, *Dem.* 14:35 and *Dem.* 10:8:

Dem. 14:35 (PS I/661.6–664.7)

Whoever has the door of his heart open acquires it [treasure of God], and whoever spreads the wings of his intellect inherits it. It dwells in the diligent man, and it is implanted in the heart of the sage. His nerves are set firmly in their sources, and he gains the hidden treasure. His thought flies over the heights, and his reflection descends to the depths. Depicted within his [the sage's] heart are amazing things, and the eyes of his senses perceive the edges of the seas. All created things are enclosed within his thought, and his disposition to receive [more] becomes vast. He [the Sage] is a great temple⁶¹⁰ for his maker: and the King of the heights comes and dwells in him, raises his intellect to the heights and makes his thought soar to the sanctuary, revealing to him treasures of all sorts. His mind wanders because of the vision, his heart is captivated by all his senses, and a thing he never knew is revealed to him. He regards it and observes the place, and his mind is awestruck with all that he sees. All the Watchers are eager to minister to him and the Seraphs cry "holy" to his glory, flying with their swift wings, and their white and shining garments, veiling their faces from his shining, rushing more swiftly than the wind.611

Dem. 10:8 (PS/I 460.1–6)

The Steward [Jesus Christ] brought me into the King's treasury and revealed to me there many precious things; and when I saw them my understanding was captivated with the great treasury. And as I looked

⁶¹⁰ Syr. محكم hayklā.

⁶¹¹ D 14:35 (PS I/661.6–664.7)

upon it, it dazzled my eyes, and captivated my thoughts, and made my reflections wander in many ways.⁶¹²

Ascent texts are most usually described as "apocalyptic," a term full of various interpretations and about which many scholars debate. Aphrahat's own writings of his journey to heaven and seeing the throne of God himself, means we must address the quagmire of discussion around apocalyptic texts and the equally complex term "mysticism."

When one encounters a text replete with angels, a sage, the heavens, a throne, and even a chariot, the term "apocalypse" comes to mind to describe it. This word carries enormous scholarly baggage and many scholars cannot even agree on how to define it. A fair amount of scholarly debate surrounds apocalyptic literature and its characterization, however; John Collins has produced a working definition of the literary genre:

'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.⁶¹³

This definition is not universally received by any means, but it is sufficiently broad to allow for many different texts to be categorized as apocalypses while at the same time not including every text with a hint of supernatural imagery. Apocalypses are, according to Collins, usually divided into two categories: those with or without otherworldly journeys.⁶¹⁴ Given that our

اد دملای محلم لدماه کای دهری مساب الامر کی به اید در محتیی: محد سامه مین کی معمود کس مدیم دریای ایک: محد سامه دس محتا کر حتاب مغدی مستورهای: محدهای الاحتیام دریایی مکتبایی

⁶¹³ The Society of Biblical Literature Apocalypse Group developed this defintion and it was published by John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14, 1 (1979): 9. For a more recent examination of the definition's function within apocalyptic scholarship, see Adela Yarbro Collins, "Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism," *Semeia* 36 (1986): 1–11; and Robert L. Webb, "Apocalyptic': Observations on a Slippery Term," *JNES* 49, 2 (Apr. 1990): 115–126. Rather than rehashing all the scholarly arguments, see the comprehensive article by Hanson, "Prolegomena," 389–413.

⁶¹⁴ Collins, "Introduction, Morphology" 13–15. Collins gives three subdivisions within the larger categories: apocalypses which have emphases upon the historical, the cosmic, or political eschatology, and finally personal eschatology. Many

⁶¹² D 10:8 (PS I/460.1-6)

main interest is in the temple, the main class of apocalypses considered is those with an otherworldly journey to the heavenly temple or God's place. A sample of Second Temple texts which fit into this category are: the Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36), the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 31–71), and 2 Enoch.⁶¹⁵ The descriptions of the celestial temple when on one of these otherworldly journeys recall the three-fold structure found in the descriptions of the Jerusalem sanctuary in Exodus.⁶¹⁶

One of the quintessential ascent texts is 1 Enoch which illustrates various important aspects of apocalyptic ascent literature. 1 Enoch has many similar images to the Demonstrations: heavenly ascent, description of the throne, a sage seeing the heavenly temple, and the sage's reaction to the journey.

ויתהלך חנוך את־האלהים ואיננו כי־לקח אתו אלהים Genesis 5:24

"Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."

From this elliptical entry in the scriptures a great literary tradition began about the seventh antediluvian hero and visionary, Enoch. 617 1 Enoch, espe-

texts transcend these subcategories, and so the subcategory classification is less useful in my opinion.

other Christian apocalypses, but for the most part they are not addressed in this study. One of the most famous Christian ascent passages attested is 2 Cor 12:2–4 wherein Paul describes "a man" ascending to heaven. But Aphrahat never alludes to nor quotes this passage, see below for further discussion, page 186. Many different Syrian Christian texts have apocalyptic overtones, including the *Liber Graduum*, the Thomas literature, Ephrem, and Macarius. For a more complete discussion of this matter see Golitzin, "A Testimony to Christianity as Transfiguration," 130–131. For a list of various apocalyptic texts within the category of otherworldly journeys see Collins, "Introduction: Morphology," 15.

⁶¹⁶ Christopher C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 83.

⁶¹⁷ The scriptural citations for Enoch are Gen 4:17–18, 5:18–24, 1 Chron 1:3, Luke 3:37, and Jude 1:14. Gen 5:24 is alluded to in Hebrews 11:5 with a more detailed account of Enoch's journey to heaven: "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God."

1 Enoch (3rd Cent B.C.E.–1st Cent C.E.) contains five independent books and additions: Chapters 1–36, The Book of the Watchers (dated approx. 3rd cent. B.C.E.); Ch. 37–71 The Book of the Similitudes (c. 105–64 B.C.E.); Ch. 72–82 The Astronomical Book (the oldest section of 1 Enoch, written no later than the 3rd cent.

cially the book entitled "The Book of the Watchers," chapters 1–36, is very popular with later mystical writers and has some common themes with Aphrahat. The author of the Book of Watchers emphasizes the heavenly temple over and above the earth-bound temple. As M. Himmelfarb explains: "Ascent to heaven in 1 Enoch 14 represents an attempt to reach the God who is no longer understood to dwell in the Jerusalem temple." The one who can reach God is Enoch, who as the pure sage is able to ascend to the heights, see the throne, and survive to tell the tale. 1 Enoch 14 has an amazing description of the tripartite structure similar to the structure of the Jerusalem temple with an outer courtyard enveloping two houses.

B.C.E.); Ch. 83–90 The Book of Dreams (c. 165–161 B.C.E.); and Ch. 91–107 The Epistle of Enoch (from 170 B.C.E.). The Astronomical Book, the Book of the Watchers, and the Epistle of Enoch all predate the last six chapters of Daniel. The composition, known to us as, 1 Enoch, survives completely only in an Ethiopic translation. 2 Enoch, or Slavonic Enoch, likely dates from the late first century C.E., and 3 Enoch, or Sefer Hekhalot, has traditions dating back to 132 C.E. with the literary attribution to Rabbi Ishmael, but it probably comes from the fifth or sixth century C.E. See E. Isaac, "I (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," OTP 1:7; and James C. VanderKam, "Biblical Interpretation in 1 Enoch and Jubilees," chap. in From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 276–279.

For a full discussion see: Francis I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," OTP 1:91–221; and P. S. Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," OTP 1:223–315. See also John J. Collins, "The Place of Apocalypticism in the Religion of Israel," in Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross, eds. Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 559–558; Freedman, ed. ABD, s.v. "Enoch, First Book of," by George W. E. Nickelsburg.; VanderKam, "Biblical Interpretation in 1 Enoch and Jubilees," 276–304; Eskola, Messiah and the Throne, 376; and Andrei Orlov, "The Flooded Arboretums: The Garden Traditions in the Slavonic Version of 3 Baruch and the Book of Giants," CBQ 65, 2 (Apr 2003): 184–196. See also the resources at www.marquette.edu/maqom for bibliographic resources on the Enochic literature.

- 618 Rowland, The Open Heaven, 220–221 and Halperin, Faces of the Chariot, 81.
- 619 Himmelfarb, "From Prophecy to Apocalypse," 161.
- 620 Robert A. Briggs, Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation, Studies in Biblical Literature, Vol. 10, ed. Hemchand Gossai (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 119. Briggs suggests that temple is not the most important image in 1 Enoch 14; it is depicting heaven as the route of the stars and source of water, etc. Briggs has missed the centrality of the Jerusalem temple. If Philo's contention is correct, then the temple is the basic structure of the cosmos itself. For more about Philo, see page 113. The Temple is the gateway by which one can journey to the heavens and see

Enoch's vision, the heavenly throne is within the two houses, one of marble and fire, the second completely of fire. It becomes common in later Jewish heavenly ascent literature to have the adept journey through three stages. He ascended through the wall, which corresponds to the balustrade—which in the Jerusalem temple marked the boundary between the Court of the Gentiles and the inner temple ('ulam). Then the adept arrives at the sanctuary building (great house or hekhal), and then the second house, the holy of holies (devir) containing the divine throne. The tripartite structure of the temple embodies a cosmology of three heavens.⁶²¹

Enoch's vision of the temple has influences from Ezekiel 1.622 I. Gruenwald observes that 1 Enoch 14 "can be considered a model-vision of Merkavah mysticism." This is possibly one of the earliest accounts of a person ascending to the heavenly temple extant. 624

And as I [Enoch] shook and trembled, I fell upon my face and saw a vision. And behold there was an opening before me (and) a second house ... in every respect it excelled (the other)—in glory and great honor—to

the stars, etc, so it is of paramount importance for the Enochic literature as well as for Aphrahat. As T. Eskola observes about 1 Enoch 14: "The whole scene is theocratic, transcendent, and cultic. All this is supported by an intentional use of temple imagery." Eskola, Messiah and the Throne, 73.

⁶²¹ Morray-Jones, A Transparent Illusion, 30; and Martha Himmelfarb, "Apocalyptic Ascent and the Heavenly Temple," in SBL: 1987 Seminar Papers ed. Kent H. Richards, (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 211.

622 See Rachel Elior, "From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines: Prayer and Sacred Son in the *Hekhalot* Literature and Its Relation to Temple Traditions," *JSQ* 4 (1997): 217–267; and April D. DeConick, *Voices of the Mystics*, Journal for the study of the New Testament, supplement series, vol. 157 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 59–64.

In 1 Enoch 14, C. C. Rowland finds parallels with Dan 7:13, T. Abraham 10, Ezek 8:2, and 2 Kgs 2:11, Exod 24:10; 38:22; b. Hagiah 15a; Is 6.1; Ezek 1.26; Dan 7.9; Rev 4.2; Slav. Enoch 22.2; and Life of Adam and Eve 25. Christopher C. Rowland, "The Second Temple: Focus of Ideological Struggle?," in Templum Amicitae: Essays on the Second Temple Presented to Ernst Bammel, ed. William Horbury (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 179.

623 Gruenwald, Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism, 36.

624 Stone suggested that the *Book of Watchers* of *Enoch* date from the third century B.C.E. since some fragments were found at Qumran. Michael E. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions: A Profile of Judaism from Ezra to Jewish Revolts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 30–31.

the extent (of its glory and honor) it is impossible for me to recount to you concerning its glory and greatness.⁶²⁵

Enoch is not the only scriptural figure who trembled at the sight of God. Aphrahat describes Moses as trembling when he went up Mt. Sinai to receive the commandments. Aphrahat's description of Moses' ascent and vision of God has many similar ideas and similar terminology to Enoch's vision in 1 Enoch. Aphrahat also states the ineffable aspect of the vision of God, as Enoch does in the previous passage. Aphrahat writes: "All mouths are inadequate, all languages are insufficient." Enoch's vision of the heavenly throne continues in 1 Enoch 14:

And I observed and saw inside it a lofty throne—its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun; and the voice of the cherubim; and from beneath the throne were issuing streams of flaming fire. It was difficult to look at it. And the Great Glory was sitting upon it—as for his gown, which was shining more brightly than the sun, it was whiter than any snow. None of the angels was able to come in and see the face of the Excellent and the Glorious One; and no one of the flesh can see him—the flaming fire was round about him, and a great fire stood before him.⁶²⁸

Aphrahat describes the sage seeing the ministering angels with analogous imagery to 1 Enoch 14, but he adds different details from the Enochic account. "All the Watchers are eager to minister to him and the Seraphs cry 'holy' to his glory, flying with their swift wings, and their white and shining garments, veiling their faces from his shining [countenance], rushing swifter than the wind." In both accounts the ministering angels are unable to look upon God and are serving him. 100 The common denominator between

627 D 23:59 (PS II/121.23–124.2) see page 142.

^{625 1} Enoch 14:14–16. Isaac, "I (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," 20–21.

⁶²⁶ See D 18:4 (PS I/828.4–6), see page 139.

^{628 1} Enoch 14:18-22, in Isaac, "I (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," 21.

 $^{^{629}}$ D 14:35 (PS I/ 664.4–6) see page 140. Aphrahat uses almost exactly the same terms to describe the angels serving the *Shekintā* when Moses sees the throne in Passage #4 D 18:4 (PS I/828.4–18).

⁶³⁰ The ministering angels who intercede in the heavenly temple are functioning as the priests do in the earthly Jerusalem temple. M. Himmelfarb suggests that some of the apocalyptic literature was actually produced within the priestly community rather than just the prophetic realm of Jewish life. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 28 and 211.

Aphrahat and 1 Enoch is most likely the Hebrew scriptures rather than any direct source reliance of Aphrahat upon the Enochic literature. Aphrahat uses many images about the heavenly temple similar to those found in Enoch, but the name Enoch is only mentioned twelve times in the Demonstrations. The aspect of Enoch's story which Aphrahat notes most often is that Enoch was translated, 12 to heaven so he would not die because of his excellence and because he was pleasing to God. Enoch's vision and his prophetic and mystical roles are wholly ignored. Enoch is a very minor character in Aphrahat's work, and this is interesting given the great role that Enoch had in Jewish apocalypse and ascent writings. Aphrahat is far more interested in Elijah than Enoch. The Demonstrations and 1 Enoch have some common elements which suggests that their authors participate in the same mystical tradition stemming from the common source of heavenly temple descriptions in the Hebrew scriptures.

In Hebrew scriptures, the one who first and foremost may see God is Moses himself. Aphrahat uses Moses as the paradigmatic ascent character for the Christian sage; although, Aphrahat does warn against trying to fulfill all aspects of Moses' ascent. To remind the reader of Aphrahat's own words about Moses' ascent to see God; it is as follows:

Dem. 18:4 (PS I/828.4–18) Moses went up to Mount Sinai, entered into the cloud, and received the commandment. Moses saw the shining

The Watchers in 1 Enoch 12–16 are symbolically presented as disobedient priests who need the guidance and correction of Enoch. M. E. Stone concludes that: "The portrayal here of the watchers as disobedient priests from the heavenly temple suggests that this author has a complaint against the Jerusalem priesthood, and the setting of the story in upper Galilee near the ancient shrine of Dan may reflect the actual geographical place of origin of this tradition." Stone, Jewish Writings of the Second Temple, 93.

- ⁶³¹ A. Orlov suggests that Aphrahat most likely uses Mosaic adaptations of the Enochic tradition in a similar manner to Ezekiel the Tragedian's *Exagoge*. Personal correspondence, January 2005. See page 140.
- 632 The verb "translated" is the *ethpa'el* of the root shnā. Payne Smith, 586–587.
- ⁶³³ Cf. Letter of Inquiry PS I/4.12, D1:4 (33.9), D22:3 (PS I/996.11) and D23:31 (PS II/73.25–27).
- ⁶³⁴ Ephrem mentions both Elijah and Enoch in the *Nisibene Hymn* 36:2, but it is a straightforward reference concerning those who will not be found in Sheol.
 - 635 See discussion of Elijah and Enoch in Aphrahat, page 183.

splendor, was afraid, and quaked. Trembling seized him, for he saw the *Shekintā* of the Most High which drew near to the mountain, the great power of the throne of God, to which the myriads and thousands minister, veiling their faces from his shining splendor. They rush and swiftly fly with their wings, calling, sanctifying, and exalting his majesty. They are watchful, prepared, and swiftly rushing; [they are] adorned, beautiful, excellent, and desirable. They rush, sanctifying, accomplishing his commandment, ascending and descending in the air, like swift lightning flashes.⁶³⁶

One of the key differences between the Moses account in *Dem.* 18:4 and the other three ascent passages (*Dem.* 14:35, *Dem.* 23:59, and *Dem.* 10:8), is that Moses encounters the divine physically while remaining on the earth.⁶³⁷ In the other rapture accounts, Aphrahat describes an "inner" versus "in the body" ascent. This difference is crucial because there were those, both Jews and Christians, who believed that they could see the body of the Divine with their physical eyes. The background of this idea is an anthropomorphic understanding of the Deity. Aphrahat both uses ideas very similar to anthropomorphism and refutes it in his *Demonstrations*. The whole concept of "seeing God," how a person may do so and where it may occur is closely linked with this issue.

For Aphrahat, it is the Christian sage who has become a temple for God who may ascend to the heavens and see God with the eyes of his heart. The mystical vision of ascent to the heavenly throne described by Aphrahat follows I. Gruenwald's definition for apocalypse literature almost exactly, except that in Gruenwald's definition it is the soul which ascends, rather than the intellect.⁶³⁸ Gruenwald defines the mystical vision thus:

معلم حدید المن المن المدر محل حدید مموند مسلم حدید است محدید است عصده المنه المنه عصده المنه عصده المنه عصده المنه المن

⁶³⁶ D 18:4 (PS I/828.4-18)

⁶³⁷ D 18:4 (PS I/828:4-6) See page 139.

⁶³⁸ The key to both traditions of mystical vision is that the inner aspect of the person sees the divine. The differences between using the more traditional "soul" ((געב) napshā) instead of Aphrahat's preference for "intellect" (or the cognates thereof) is negligible. In D 4:11 (PS I/161), the soul is the area which is cleaned by

[w]hen the soul of the mystic sees itself as transported to heavenly realms, receives information there and thereafter returns to the body. The major point of difference between prophetism and apocalyptic is the desire for direct vision of the deity in heaven. This is a new stage of development, instead of the old or regular way of encountering the divine who dwells in the sanctuary or temple.⁶³⁹

If one chooses to follow Gruenwald's characterization, then Aphrahat's descriptions of the heavens and the role of the Sage's inner being may fit more appropriately within the apocalyptic realm rather than the prophetic. Aphrahat has a melding of these two traditions as defined by Gruenwald. Following our contention that temple imagery is key in Aphrahat, then the encounter with the divine is a direct vision of God in heaven but via a spiritualized and internalized concept of the temple. However, at least within the context of Aphrahat's personal vision in *Dem.* 10:8, there may be a further witness to this vision occurring within the church building during the eucharistic celebration. The Sage in Aphrahat's work receives the knowledge of God, which he then proclaims back on earth. As Aphrahat writes in *Dem.* 10:8 concerning faith and the teachings of the Lord:

For whoever withholds part of anything he has received, whatever he has received will be taken away from him. Because, my friend, I have discovered that, receiving now from that treasure that does not fail, I have sent it to you; yet though I have sent it to you, it is all with me. The treasure does not fail because it is the wisdom of God, and the steward is our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶⁴⁰

Aphrahat's sage character functions as the mystic who may be taken to heaven where he sees God, gains the divine treasure, and returns to earth to

Jesus' name to allow for the receiving of grace. Aphrahat uses soul over 150 times throughout all of his works, most often to describe the inner area of the human being which may receive the Holy Spirit. See too, Terzoli, "Áme et Esprit chez Aphraate," 105–118, and Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan*, vol. 1, 185–187.

⁶³⁹ Gruenwald, From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism, 134.

⁶⁴⁰ D 10:8 (PS I/461.25–464.6).

teach what he has seen. His mystical journey has many overtones of otherworldly journeys as appearing within *Merkabah* literature.

Aphrahat is a mystic who describes visionary ascent journeys by Moses, an unnamed Sage, and by himself. These ascents involve traveling to the heavenly temple which sounds very similar to a Jewish Rabbinic mystical tradition called *Merkabah* mysticism. As explained in the introduction of this work, *Merkabah* mysticism is practiced by those who are described as Descenders to the Chariot follow a visionary based mystical tradition following the inspiration of Ezekiel. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai (approx. 150 C.E.) is one of the famous adherents to this mystical tradition. The Sage or visionary adept ascends through the heavenly palaces (*Hekhalot*) and through this journey he must deal with angels, trials, and then the sage may stand before the Heavenly Throne and see the Glory of God. The Chariot language comes from Ezekiel and his heavenly chariot as the means by which the adept may ascend.⁶⁴¹

An apocalypse or revelation of the heart is a motif which is also shown in *Merkabah* mysticism of the later Jewish tradition. The Syrian Christians are an interesting witness, or even bridge, between the Second Temple apocalypse literature and the Jewish mystical traditions of the later middle ages. We find a few instances of *Merkabah* ascent texts in the Babylonian Talmud.

The Talmudic texts were compiled around 200 to 500 C.E., so Aphrahat's own writings were in the middle of the compilation. Therefore, we cannot presume that Aphrahat read a completed version of the Talmud, although he may have known of some of the common themes and ideas. The most likely common source between Aphrahat and the Rabbinic authors is the Hebrew scriptures itself. Even though the Talmud was not completed until long after Aphrahat's time the vision ascent accounts have many common features with the Sage's own writings and show a common mystical bent in the Jewish and Syriac Christian thought.

⁶⁴¹ See Introduction, page 25.

⁶⁴² Adin Steinsaltz, *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition* (New York: Random House, 1989), 1–3. David Halperin argues that the ascent to the Hekhalot accounts are far earlier than the compilations and may stretch to before the turn of the common era. If this is the case, then it would be possible that Aphrahat did know something of the Merkabah riders vision accounts; however, we cannot determine this with any certainty. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 63–64.

The Babylonian Talmud has a few stories which suggest the presence of *Merkabah* mysticism with stories of the rabbis who have "expounded on the works of the Chariot." One key idea which comes out of these stories is that a person who wishes to study the mysteries of the Chariot must have five qualifications (from a reading of Isaiah 3:3): "The captain of fifty, and the man of rank, and the counselor, and the cunning charmer, and the skillful enchanter." This text refers to someone who is over the age of fifty and who has come to a knowledge of his own mind. Age is of great importance for these sages; there is a story of a school age boy who started to expound on the Chariot and was engulfed in flames. So one must be a sage who is older and who has studied the scriptures for many years. Only those who are worthy of the honor will see God as the Gemara author of the *BT Megillah* 24b states:

They said to R. Judah: many have discerned sufficiently [with their mind's eye] to expound the Chariot (1 Ez) and yet they never saw it? What says R. Judah to this? There [he can reply], all depends on the discernment of the heart, and the expounder by concentrating his mind can know, but here one reads for the benefit which he derives there from, and this one derives no benefit.⁶⁴⁴

R. Judah emphasizes the importance of the adept's heart and the focus of the mind for dealing with Ezekiel's chariot which means ascent visions. So the worthy person must have the right inner fortitude and concentration to be able to go through such a mystical journey. Aphrahat has a similar idea concerning who may see God: a sage must be wise and well educated in the teaching of scriptures, and he must have the correct spiritual disposition. Two stories from the Talmud bear quoting in full concerning the "expounding on the Chariot." The first is the story of R. Eleazar and R. Johanan b. Zakkai. R. Eleazar asks to be able to "expound on the works of

⁶⁴³ BT Hagigah, Chapter 3, col. 13a. See Israel Abrahams, "Hagigah," *The Babylonian Talmud Seder Mo'ed*, vol. IV, ed. Isidore Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1938), 75–76.

⁶⁴⁴ BT Megillah 24b. See Maurice Simon, "Megillah," *The Babylonian Talmud Seder Mo'ed*, vol. IV, ed. Isidore Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1938), 146. Also cited in Halperin, 335. The *Mishnah Megillah* 4:10f states: "They do not use as the prophetic lection the selection of the chariot." Ezek 1:1ff. *The Mishnah*, ed. Jacob Neusner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 324.

⁶⁴⁵ See section above, "To See God," p. 165.

the Chariot." R. Johanan b. Zakkai then gets off the donkey and sits under an olive tree:

[...] he answered "Is it proper that whilst thou art expounding the 'Work of the Chariot,' and the Divine Presence is with us, and the ministering angels accompany us, I should ride on the ass!" R. Eleazar started expounding, and "forthwith fire came down from heaven and encompassed all the trees in the field; [thereupon] they all began to utter [divine] song. What was the song they uttered?—"Praise the Lord from the earth, ye sea-monsters, and all deeps ... fruitful trees and all cedars ... Hallelujah." (Ps. 148: 7, 9, 14.) An angel [then] answered from the fire and said: This is the very 'Work of the Chariot.'

This passage has many interesting aspects: what starts the vision, the setting for it, the angels, and fire. In this Talmudic passage, one rather audacious Rabbi, Eleazar, asks to be able to explain or experience the works of the Chariot. His elder and, one assumes, more mystically experienced companion R. Johanan b. Zakkai then complies by getting off his donkey and the "expounding" begins. So having an experienced mentor is important and just asking to be able to have the vision means one may receive it. Aphrahat does not have the idea of a mentor visionary; however, in Dem. 14:35 he does allude to the idea that one must have the correct inner disposition in order to have the ascent vision. One's mind and heart must be in the right place. The setting for the Talmudic vision is on the side of the road, not in some special place or within a large gathering. So it seems one may experience the Chariot anywhere. The last two aspects of this vision fit together, the angels and the heavenly fire. The act of having the vision of the Chariot causes a forest fire and the angels to come down and sing. One interesting congruence with Aphrahat's ascent accounts is that through the study or expounding on Scripture the angels are brought down to earth to be present with the Sage. This is reminiscent of Aphrahat's Dem. 14:35 ascent account where there is also a "descending into the heart." The divine, in turn, descends to the mundane level contingent upon the right actions of the sage.

We now turn to a second Chariot account found in the Babylonian Talmud concerning R. Joshua and R. Jose the priest.

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⁶⁴⁶ BT Hagigah 14b. Abrahams, "Hagigah," 88-89.

They said: Let us also expound the 'Work of the Chariot'; so R. Joshua began an exposition. Now that day was the summer solstice; [nevertheless] the heavens became overcast with clouds and a kind of rainbow appeared in the cloud, and the ministering angels assembled and came to listen like people who assemble and come to watch the entertainments of a bridegroom and bride. [Thereupon] R. Jose the priest went and related what happened before R. Johanan b. Zakkai and [the latter] said: Happy are ye, and happy is she that bore you; happy are my eyes that have seen thus. Moreover, in my dream, I and ye were reclining on Mount Sinai, when a *Bath Kol* (heavenly voice) was sent to us, [saying]: Ascend hither, ascend hither! [Here are] great banqueting chambers and fine dining couches prepared for you; you and your disciples and your disciples' disciples are designated for the third class.⁶⁴⁷

This story has the ascent of the sages to the heavenly realm set within the context of a dream, similar to Jacob's dream of Genesis 31. In this story the ascent does not occur within the context of the expounding on the Chariot, rather it occurs after, but it is still "triggered" because of the student coming to understand the meaning of the Chariot. In this account of the Chariot, there is also tangible physical effects upon the earth. In the first account, a forest fire; in this account, a storm with a rainbow. The angels also appear for the experience; in the first, they sing; in the second, they are gathering as though for a wedding. R. Johanan b. Zakkai is then told by a heavenly voice that he may come up to heaven with his students and that there is a great feast waiting for him. Aphrahat has very little in common with this account of the Chariot except for the angels and the whole idea of ascending to the heavens.

We have seen some examples of the classic Babylonian Talmudic accounts of the Chariot and what happens to the sage who comes to expound upon Ezekiel's chariot. Some key aspects are physical effects upon earth of the vision, the angels coming down to listen, the sage going up to heaven, the Divine coming to be present with the men who are able to understand the Scripture fully and the sage having a mystical vision either in a dream or awake.

For Aphrahat, the ideal result of becoming a divine temple is that the person may see God with the eyes of the mind while the body still remains

⁶⁴⁷ This quotation then leads straight into the garden or *pardes* account of R. Akiba. BT Hagigah 14b Abrahams, "Hagigah," 89–90.

on earth. In *Dem.* Six, Aphrahat declares: "Let us clean our hearts from wickedness, so that we may see the Most High in his Glory." ⁶⁴⁸ Later in the chapter he expands the description of the righteous by incorporating Isa 33:17: "Whoever cleans his heart from dishonesty, 'His eyes shall see the King in his beauty." (Isa 33.17)⁶⁴⁹ A. Golitzin observes that Isa 33:17 is used "routinely" to refer to eschatological visions by various Christian authors from the second century C.E. onwards even into the eleventh century. ⁶⁵⁰ So Aphrahat is in good company with his use of Isaiah within the context of humans seeing God. Isaiah is also important for those who have anthropomorphite tendencies. ⁶⁵¹

مح الحاكم لحلح معمونه ساح عنص. خراق Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men," 133.

Aphrahat only quotes Isa 33:17 twice in his *Demonstrations*. The second passage is D 9:4 (PS I/413.14–16) "The inner chambers of their hearts are full of good treasures, and their conscience* is pure from deceit. The eyes of their mind contemplate what is above; they gaze on the beauty of their Lord (Isa 33:17) and rejoice at all times."

אסבת לבמס , כלי שיבא לבאא: סובי אני אאדאמס . כל יבלא. בית כובימס , כל ב ביסכא: סעיים בשמפים וכימס : סעום כמ בל וב.

*(Κλικά ti'rātā is the same word as the Greek term θεωρία theoria)

of cosmic proportions includes Christian and Jewish traditions, for example, the Shiur Qomah texts. The rabbinic anthropomorphite tendencies expand from the scriptural references and were included in the Talmudic traditions which survived into the middle ages. A small sample of scriptural verses with anthropomorphite overtones: Gen 1:26, Isa 66:1, Exod 17:6. Num 11:33 even suggests that the Lord has a nose. As M. Bar-Ilan explains: "This ancient belief was elaborated as could be seen in Shiur Qoma and in the words attributed to R. Ismael, R. Akiba, Rab, and R. Hisda." Meir Bar-Ilan, "The Hand of God: A Chapter in Rabbinic Anthropmorphism," http://faculty.biu.ac.il/~barilm/handofgd.html: www.mu.edu/maqom, 2003, page 7. See also Graham Gould, "The Image of God and the Anthropomorphite Controversy in Fourth Century Monasticism," in Origeniana Quinta, ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 549–557.

One Christian sect of the fourth century, the Audians, interpreted Isaiah literally and claimed that God had bodily parts of cosmic proportion. Theodoret of Cyrus and Epiphanius of Salamis both describe the Audian sectarians in their writings, and Ephrem even mentions them by name. Theodoret writes: "he [Audius] understood the Divine Being to have a human form, and conjectured it to be en-

The humble, those who reject the world,⁶⁵² and the sage⁶⁵³ are those who may see God if they completely follow the ascetic and celibate life. Occasionally, Aphrahat uses straightforward "see" to describe what a person may be able to do with regards to interacting with God while in the ascent moment. This may imply that a person can see God with the physical eyes of the body. When all his writings are considered, it is my contention that Aphrahat is fighting against a view that one may physically ascend to the divine temple and see God. He goes to great pains to make sure that his audience realizes that one cannot see God with the body's eyes; it is with

veloped in bodily parts." Theodoret of Cyrus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 114. Theodoret, Eccl. Hist. Chp. IX, Théodoret de Cyr, *Histoire des Moines de Syrie*, 372–405. For an English translation, see Theodoret of Cyrus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 3, *NPNF Second Series*, trans. B. Jackson (New York, NY: Christian Literature Pub., 1892; reprint Hendrickson, 1995), 114. See also Epiphanius, Panarion, 6, 70, 1. Epiphanius, *Panarion Haer. 65–80 De Fide*, vol. 3, ed. Karl Holl (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), 232–249. For an English translation see, Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion*, vol. XXXVI, *Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies*, trans. Frank Williams (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 403–417.

See the following for secondary sources on the Audians: Henri C. Puech, "Audianer," Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950), 910–915; Frank L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds. Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2d ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974; reprint Oxford University Press, 1993), s.v. "Audiai."; and Fred Ledegang, "Anthropomorphites and Origenists in Egypt at the End of the Fourth Century," in Origeniana Septima, eds. Wolfgang A. Bienert and Uwe Kuhneweg (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 375–379; Heinz Kruse, "Ein Audianische Nachtgebet im Römischen Brevier?" OrChr 66 (1982): 75–97; and Guy G. Stroumsa, "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions among the Audians," in Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land, eds. Arieh Kofsky and Guy G. Stroumsa (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1998), 97–108.

⁶⁵² D 6:1 (PS I/245.15–19) "But let us leave the world which is not ours, so that we may arrive at the place to which we have been invited. Let us raise up our eyes to the heights, so that we may see the splendour which shall be revealed. Let us lift up our wings as eagles, so that we may see the Body there where it is."

⁶⁵³ A sample of the numerous articles on the topic of *visio dei* are: Antoine Guillaumont, "Les visions mystiques dans le monachisme oriental Chrétien.," chap. in *Les Visions Mystiques* (Paris: Nouvelles de l'Institut Catholique de Paris, 1977; Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1979), 116–127; Bonian, "Purity of Heart in Syriac Prayer." 121–126.

the eyes of faith or with the eyes of the heart. The "seeing" is interiorized; the channel is not the physical eye but the interior eye of the heart or soul. Aphrahat opens and closes his *Demonstrations*, in a rather chiastic manner, by setting all of his writings on the spiritual rather than on the more mundane physical plane. In the first Demonstration, he writes: "Listen, therefore, my friend, and open the inner eyes of your heart to me, and the senses of your mind to the matter that I will say to you."654 The final Demonstration has in part the prayer: "Open our ears to the prayer of your writings, and the eyes of our hearts will reach out near to you on high."655 The eyes of the heart are the primary function for the person, not the physical senses; it is the spiritual sense which is most important.

In Aphrahat's view, those persons who strive to develop their spiritual senses, their heart's eyes, are the humble.⁶⁵⁶ He wrote a whole Demonstra-

⁶⁵⁵ D 23:53 (PS II/104.15–17)

656 Pachomius of Egypt (c. 292–346 C.E.) also notes the importance of being humble if one is to see God. His further reputed agenda is to emphasize that one should not ask to see God; it is granted to a few select people who are worthy. He says further: "But all the same, hear about a great vision. For what is greater than such a vision, to see the invisible God in a visible man, his temple?" Pachomian Koinonia, vol. 1, trans. Armand Veilleux (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications Inc., 1980), 330. See the First Greek Life of Pachomius, Section 48. Critical edition François Halkin, Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae, Subsidia hagiographica 19. Brussels, 1932. See also Henry Chadwick, "Pachomios and the Idea of Sanctity," in The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1980), 11–24. For further exploration of Pachomius' ascetic ideal, see also Elm, 'Virgins of God', 283–311.

Pachomius himself is this temple of God, as argued by Mark S. Burrows in "On the Visibility of God in the Holy Man: A Reconsideration of the Role of the Apa in the Pachomian Vitae," VC 41 (1987): 11–33. Pachomius' hagiographer reduces the importance of seeing God and transfers this concern to seeing God's creation. Pachomius himself then exemplifies God's temple. There is an underlying concern that there are those within Pachomius' community who are asking to see God and may even be proud of their visions. The trivializing of the vision experience may be due to pressures within the community which are not directly discussed. Aphrahat may have similar difficulties within his audience given his great

tion on the topic of the humble people, *Dem.* Nine. In it, he uses a conflation of verses from Proverbs to provide the scriptural evidence for combining humility and seeing: "Again, it says, "The one with a humble spirit and downcast eyes is better than the one who conquers a city." He continues to write about the holy person's body remaining on the earth while the heart and the mind are in the heavens:

The humble person has humility, and his heart is lifted up to the highest height, the place [where] his treasure is; there he meditates. His [physical] eyes gaze at the earth, but the eyes of his mind⁶⁵⁸ see the highest height.⁶⁵⁹

Two later passages in *Dem.* Nine, echo the same themes of the humble person's "eyes of the mind" accessing and regarding the heavenly treasures. Aphrahat is very careful always to emphasize that it is the mind or the intelligence which can ascend to the heavens; it is not the humble person's body that is taken up to heaven.⁶⁶⁰

Aphrahat uses many similar terms to describe what aspect of the person actually goes up to heaven, they are: אוֹבילא taritā intelligence, mind, thought, or conscience⁶⁶¹; אונים mahshahtā reasoning, meditation, or intention⁶⁶²; אונים ידים reyānā intellect, reflection, or mind⁶⁶³; and אונים makā

emphasis upon the mental vision and ascent rather than some physical manifestation thereof.

⁶⁵⁷ D 9:1 (PS I/408:14–16) Proverbs 16:19, 32

יאשו בייא ויאין פעדא אידא על שט ציאיון בייאין ציי בייא אידי מייא נייאין איי

658 Syr. ozza maďeh.

659 D 9:2 (PS I/412.1-4)

מביבא מבינא: סלבת ומ כוסמא בליא: מאולו ומימולת ומב ויחא מחדרות ביות מולת חוב באובא: מבות מובת כוסמא בליא:

660 The second passage is D 9:4 (PS I/416:21–25) "Their [the humble] intellects [and tar'ithun] have been captured by what is above and are set there, for they are waiting to enter the holy place. Their eyes are open and they gaze on that place and see the Bridegroom who is readying himself."

⁶⁶¹ Cf. D 9:2 (PS I/409.23), D 9:4 (PS Ì/416.22), D 14:35 (PS I/661.4, 7, 19).

⁶⁶² Cf. D 9:2 (PS I/412.3, D 10:8 (PS I/460.5), D 14:35 (PS I/661.5, 12, 16, 20).

⁶⁶³ Cf. D 10:8 (PS I/460.5), D 14:35 (PS I/661.6, 22, 664.1). See Poirier, "L'Évangile selon Thomas (log 16 et 23)," 16 for a discussion of the non-Gnostic overtones of the term "one intellect."

mind, intellect, reflections.⁶⁶⁴ The common denominator among all of these different words is that they are non-corporeal. There is a very simple reason for all the thoughts arising, as Aphrahat writes about the humble: "Their intellect⁶⁶⁵ is caught up⁶⁶⁶ and placed in the heights, and they wait to enter into the Holy Place."⁶⁶⁷ Perpetual dwelling in heaven is the hope of those who can have their thoughts ascend and therefore see God while still on earth.

Aphrahat functions within the ascent tradition of the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic themes, but he veers away from insinuating any idea of the human body ascending to the heavenly realm. The emphasis in Aphrahat's text is that the sage's body remains on the physical earth while the thoughts ascend to heaven. Aphrahat battles with a belief that states a person may physically ascend to the heavens and see God in the manner of Enoch⁶⁶⁸ and Elijah,⁶⁶⁹ who are key figures in *Merkahah* mysticism. The Sage explains, "he [Elijah] put all his thoughts⁶⁷⁰ in heaven, he was caught up⁶⁷¹ in the fiery chariot to heaven, and his dwelling-place was there for

⁶⁶⁴ Cf. D 10:8 (PS I/460.3) and D 9:2 (PS I/412.4).

⁶⁶⁵ Syr. amberih tarithun.

⁶⁶⁶ Syr. <u>Ди</u> <u>h</u>tap.

⁶⁶⁷ D 9:4 (PS I/416.21–23) Other places where Holy place *beyt maqdshā* is used are: D 2:6 (PS I/57.21–22) "He entered into the holy place not made with hands"

⁽כבל לבנה אבים הלא בפנה באינה). Gabriel brings the offering to the holy place (בנה אבים) which is heaven in D 3:15 (PS I/133.19). The Jerusalem temple is also called the holy place in D 4:3 (PS I/144.7), "Again, when Solomon built the sanctuary (בנה אבים) and offered up sacrifices and whole offerings" and in D 19:1 (PS I/845.16) "They dwelled in it four hundred and forty years before Solomon built the holy house ..."

⁶⁶⁸ Enoch is only cited twelve times by name in Aphrahat's sermons. See the discussion of Enoch, page 168.

⁶⁶⁹ Elijah is cited by name as an example of the Christian life far more often than Enoch, over fifty times to Enoch's twelve. In D 6:13, Elijah is paralleled with John and in D 21:14 (PS I/965–968) he is compared with Jesus. Elijah is one of many examples of the virginal life, see above D 6:1 (PS I/253.9–10) and he has the likeness of angels D 6:5 (PS I/265). Elijah is mentioned also far more frequently by name than Enoch in the scriptures, over ninety five times. Cf. 1 Kings 17–21, 2 Kings 1–10, 1 Chron. 8:27, 2 Chron 21:12, Ezra 10:21, 26, Malachi 4:5, Matt 11:14, 16:14, 17:3–12, 27:47–49, (and parallels), John 1:21, 25, Rom. 11:2, and James 5:17.

⁶⁷⁰ Syr. مخنعه marniteh.

⁶⁷¹ Syr. <u>h</u>tap.

ever."⁶⁷² Aphrahat emphasizes the mental disposition of Elijah to explain his being physically taken into heaven, according to Scripture.⁶⁷³ But, Elijah's physical ascent is offset by Aphrahat's emphasis upon the mental ascent. Elijah is an example of ascent, but he is the exception rather than the rule. For Aphrahat, one may see heaven, but only in the thoughts of the mind; one's body must and will stay firmly planted on the ground. Aphrahat may be distancing himself from the *Merkahah* rider proponents who use Elijah as the example of someone who can ride a chariot and physically see the temples of heaven.⁶⁷⁴ The Sage explicitly rebuts the idea of riding a chariot to heaven: "Whoever waits to be caught up into the clouds, let him not make for himself adorned chariots."⁶⁷⁵ He knew that the way to see God is not to wait to be physically taken up into heaven in some mechanical contrivance, but rather to enter into the heart and there see God in his Glory. It is a spiritual or mental vision, not a physical journey, but the experience is still very powerful and moving.

Aphrahat's great emphasis upon the non-corporeal aspect of the ascent experience suggests that he has a hidden agenda, or at the very least, hidden polemical opponents. But he is not alone in this concern. The *Ascension of Isaiah*, chapter 6, also emphasizes that it is Isaiah's mind that was taken up to heaven during his vision, not his body.⁶⁷⁶ Aphrahat may be addressing his remarks about the "eyes of the mind seeing God" to a group of

672 D 6:5 (PS I/264.10–12)

סומת בלה מיניאה ביניא אלעולף במיברא וייוא ליביא המסא מבמיה לבלת ולכן.

⁶⁷³ The *Merkabah* mystics also regarded their ascent experiences to be mental ascents while their bodies remained on earth. As J. Dan explains: "the experience is one of a complete departure of the mystic's spirit from its physical enclosure and its free roaming among the divine palaces." Dan, "The Religious Experience of the *Merkarah*," 300.

⁶⁷⁴ The fundamental scriptural text for this tradition concerning Elijah is 2 Kings 2:11: "And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

 $^{^{675}}$ D 6:1 (PS I/249.5–6) Aphrahat may be alluding to Ps. 20:7 (19:7 LXX) "Some glory in chariots, some in horses, but we glory in the name of the Lord."

unnamed people who defend physical ascent to heaven. Aphrahat presents a "corrected" version of Jewish ascent spirituality; a holy person may see God, but not with physical eyes, only with mental faculties. The vision of the heavenly throne, the angels, and the glory of God Himself follows the scriptural accounts, and the sage's experience is very similar to the rabbinic reports of their own ascent experiences. There is one key difference, Aphrahat never refers to any physical effect upon the earth in his ascent account. The two Talmudic accounts both mention tangible physical manifestations of the vision: in the first passage the trees are set ablaze; in the second, there is a storm and a rainbow. The closest Aphrahat comes to a physical effect during a vision ascent is the description of the angels as lightning in Moses' ascent, *Dem.* 18:4.

The question then arises, why does Aphrahat use the passage about Moses on Mt. Sinai where Moses obviously sees God physically and not mentally? Aphrahat does not and could not ignore this crucial event in the salvation history of both Christians and Jews. He minimizes the fact that Moses sees God physically in *Dem.* 18:4 but he does mention that Moses and the mountains were quaking. There is a mention of a corporeal aspect as well as the more detailed description of the non-corporeal angels. Despite Aphrahat's own agenda in refuting those who claim to have a corporeal ascent experience, the important mystical experience is still the humble holy person seeing God with the mind.

Some interesting "omissions" concerning heavenly ascent and seeing God in Aphrahat's works must be noted. The sage omits citing Isa 6:3 verbatim: "And one [angel] called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." Although, he does allude to Isa 6:3 frequently, he never quotes it explicitly. Aphrahat also never quotes directly from the book of Revelation nor Ezekiel 1:26: "And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form." Daniel 7 is quoted extensively, but only in *Dem.* Five, "On Wars." Aphrahat uses the Daniel passages in the simple sense of the text to show that the persecutions occurring are prophesied and therefore can be overcome.⁶⁷⁷ All of these scriptural passages are filled with interesting ascent and *Merkabah* type imagery.

677 For a study of Daniel and Demonstration 5, see Craig Morrison, "The Reception of the Book of Daniel in Aphrahat's V Demonstration, 'On Wars," Vol 7. no. 1 (January 2004) http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol7No1/HV7N1Mor-

But the most interesting "omission" is that even though Aphrahat has four descriptions of a person seeing the heavens he never quotes 2 Cor 12:1-4 directly. Aphrahat has a thorough understanding of Paul, so this oversight is glaring. Why would the Sage avoid quoting Paul's description of a man who was caught up to the third heaven, into paradise, when this is very similar to what Aphrahat describes in his own ascent accounts? Is there an ulterior motive for him to avoid specifically citing Paul's ascent experience? Both Aphrahat and Paul describe spiritual experiences similar to the Merkabah mystics. I suggest that despite all the many verbal and experiential similarities between Aphrahat and Paul, Aphrahat bows to polemical pressure and avoids the "enemies" scriptural proof texts. One possible answer to Aphrahat's apparent lacunae is that these scriptural passages were being "used" by people who supported the position that one may ascend to the heavens physically. Since Aphrahat is fighting this position, he may be avoiding "using the opponents' ammunition," so to speak. These ascent passages are "off limits" for someone who is fighting against those in the physical ascent camp. The crypto-anthropomorphites of his community were probably pointing to the Pauline evidence of physical ascent to heaven; therefore, the sage takes evidence from other scriptural passages and his own personal experience to refute them. Although I cannot name who these hypothetical opponents may be, Aphrahat's reticence to use some obviously interesting ascent texts from the Scriptures makes my supposition at least possible. He is likely dealing with Christians who have too literal an understanding of Ezekiel's chariot ascent.

Aphrahat is an excellent student of Paul, even when he avoids some obvious Pauline passages. The Sage uses Pauline language and ideas throughout the *Demonstrations*. Paul and Aphrahat may also both be of a similar spiritual strain as the *Merkabah* riders. J. W. Bowker even suggests that: "Saul practiced *merkabah* contemplation as an ordinary consequence of his highly extended Pharisaic training." Paul was a zealous Pharisee, a contemporary to Johanan ben Zakkai, and Paul writes of being caught up (ἀρπαγέντα), third heaven (τρίτου οὐρανοῦ), and Paradise

rison.html. C. Morrison observers that Aphrahat is not working "merely from memory" but rather from the *Peshitta* text of Daniel. One must keep in mind that Aphrahat's "homiletic interests prevailed over accuracy when citing the biblical text." Morrison, "The Reception," 3.

⁶⁷⁸ John W. Bowker, "Merkabah "Visions and the Visions of Paul," JSS 16 (1971): 172.

(παράδεισον).⁶⁷⁹ Aphrahat's connection with *Merkabah* mysticism may be via Paul rather than from any direct knowledge the sage had from contemporary Jewish mystics. But *Dem.* 10:8 is the exception to the possibility that Aphrahat was merely following Paul's spiritual lead and getting the information "from books"—the Sage describes a personal ascent, being caught up to the heavenly realm and personal experience of the divine treasure. So Aphrahat is both a devout student of the Apostle Paul and a mystic in his own right. If Bowker's suggestion is correct about Paul being a descender to the chariot then Aphrahat's reticence about the Second Corinthians passage is even more puzzling.

The similarities of experience are evident between the Apostle and the Sage, and there are also similarities of language. In 2 Cor 12:1–4, the Apostle writes of "being caught up" into the third heaven. The verb ἀρπαγέντα, has a similar sense to Aphrahat's verb ωμαρ which he uses to describe Elijah's ascent in the fiery chariot, the spiritual people's ascent at the eschaton, and the humble ones' minds ascending to heaven. The verb htap means to take by force, plunder, do violence, seize, snatch, or

محمل لدمهم محامصيناء :مدعمل محمه محديل لمركب

⁶⁷⁹ Bowker, "Merkabah Visions," 157. See also: Gersom G. Scholem, "The Four who Entered Paradise and Paul's Ascension to Paradise," in *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 2 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965), 14–19; Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), s.v. "Jew, Paul the," by W. R. Stegner; Morray-Jones, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12)," 177–217; *idem*, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12) Part 2," 265–292; Alon Goshen Gottstein, "Four Entered Paradise Revisited," *HTR* 88, 1 (1995): 69–133; Peter Schäfer, "New Testament and *Hekhalot* Literature: The Journey Into Heaven in Paul and in *Merkavah* Mysticism," *JJS* XXXV, 1 (Spr 1984): 19–35; and Alan F. Segal, "Paul and the Beginning of Jewish Mysticism," 95–122.

⁶⁸⁰ The majority of the twenty-one references to *htap* in the *Demonstrations* are in the simple sense of taking something by force or inflicting violence upon something or someone. *Htap* references meaning "take by force" or "plunder" are: D 3:5 (PS I/108.10), D 3:7 (PSI/113.5–8), D 6:17 (PS I/305.20–21), D 14:10 (PS I/593.7), D 14:37 (PS I/673.4), D 16:1 (PS I/ 761.15), and D 22:6 (PS I/1001.23, 26). The references meaning "violent" are: D 14:43 (PS I/700.15), D 14:46 (PS I/716.17), D 15:1 (PS I/729.5), and D 19:4 (PS I/857.5). In D 5, Aphrahat juxtaposes *htp* or violence with judgement, which is an interesting dichotomy; with judgement there is not violence. "I looked for judgement, but there was violence, and for righteousness, but there was lamentation." D 5:22 (PS I/228:14–16)

catch up.⁶⁸¹ There is a sense of force and power to this verb. It is not a gentle trip up to heaven for Elijah; he is forcefully yanked up there. Aphrahat explains the transfiguration and the eschaton using Moses and Elijah as pedagogical examples.

[Christ] gave heart to the dead who were ready to live, like Moses, who appeared, and the living who remain at his coming will be confident that they will be caught up (htap) when they meet him, in the likeness of Elijah, who did not taste death and was seen with him. 682

Elijah's experience in the fiery chariot is an example of what will happen to the righteous at the Second Coming. 683 They will not be taken up to heaven gently, but rather, it will be a violent and swift snatching up to heaven. Aphrahat uses the same wording in Dem. Six to describe the eschaton for the perfect or spiritual ones who have followed Christ and been transformed:

Then those who are heavenly will be caught up (htap) into heaven, and the Spirit with which they have been clothed will make them fly, and they will inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for them from the beginning.684

People being "caught up" into heaven is not only going to occur at the end times; for the devout ascetics it may occur while they are still alive on earth, just as it did for Elijah. Aphrahat describes the humble ones: "their intellects have been captured (htap) by what is above and are set there, for they

⁶⁸¹ Payne-Smith, 138.

⁶⁸² D 23:12 (PS II/36.15–20) See also 1 Thess 4:16–17.

סלבב לבינה ובאנד לבעה היא מסשה האלשון: סמלאבלב יים reaport for the service creens start for whad ,whaa khas

⁶⁸³ See above about Elijah, page 183. Aphrahat also writes that: "[Elijah's,] prayer is freed from the hands of death and caught up from Sheol," (1 Kings 17:17–24). D 4:12 (PS I/164.10–11)

معلمه مع ستد حمله سلعه مج عيمل سحدمه:

⁶⁸⁴ D 6:18 (PS I/309.13-16) مصدح حلاسهم عمدت لعجب محواسة أدمه والصعب منالهم charly expers wook from a cirry

are waiting to enter the holy place."685 The humble have a preview of the end times. They can participate in the rewards of the Second Coming before it occurs.

Aphrahat describes the sage as a mystic who is humble, able to see God in his heart, gain the divine treasure, and then share this knowledge with the world. There are apocalyptic and *Merkabah* motifs within Aphrahat's works which suggest strongly that he is dealing with ideas and mystical suppositions common to his audience and his own spiritual make-up.⁶⁸⁶ Aphrahat has his polemical agenda to re-educate the mistaken people who think that their ascent will be physical. This agenda dictates which scriptural passages he uses in his argument. Though for the most part our focus has been upon the ascent of the human to the angelic realm, there is a dual action at work in Aphrahat's ascent texts. This is the fourth theme to be highlighted from the four ascent texts.

THEME #4 - ASCENT AND DESCENT

The fourth theme of these ascent passages is how the ascent action occurs, which is simultaneous ascent and descent from the heavens to earth. The ability to see God is dependent upon a meeting of two distant poles of existence, the convergence of the divine and the human. There are many terms for this desired convergence, but the most common term is mysticism. Aphrahat characterizes this key function of the Sage to be a meeting at half way. The person must strive to do the right things and focus the mind *down* into the heart. At the same time, (or beyond time?), God comes *down* into the heart, and when this occurs the mind can go *up* to heaven.

Through God making the person's heart his temple, the person's thought may go up and see the heavenly temple. Aphrahat describes this event in *Dem.* 23:59:

While your name is great and your works magnificent, you have shrunk your majesty enough for our tongue. Our mouth becomes sufficient for you and you dwell inside us. You sojourn in the righteous and vast is the

⁶⁸⁶ Golitzin suggests that Aphrahat is reworking the Metatron motif from *3 Enoch* "to recast into a shape consonant with Christian doctrine and spiritual practice." Golitzin, "The Place of the Presence of God," 400.

האבין אול אפבין באסבי בא באמים בא איבון ארבין אפבין אוליבן ארבין איבון איבון

place for you [in them]. Your majesty burrows into the little heart, you have made of us temples wherein your glory dwells.⁶⁸⁷

In Dem. 14:35, Aphrahat summarizes the mystical experience in a few lines:

When the sage has seen in his mind the place of many treasures, his thought is then lifted up [to heaven], and his heart conceives and gives birth to all good things, and he meditates on all that he had missed. His likeness and appearance are earthly, but the senses of his intellect are above and below.⁶⁸⁸

The dual action of ascent and descent is highlighted, together with the wise person's mind going to heaven, which results in a transformation of the human heart. Two scriptural texts where there is reference to ascent, descent, and the incarnation are Eph 4:10 and John 1:51. "He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things." (Eph 4:10) "And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (John 1:51) The incarnation in the scriptures is described in similar terms to Aphrahat's ascent occurrences.

In another passage, Aphrahat states that: "He [Christ] is the king, the son most noble, who is fit to receive the kingdom: we worship his littleness in order to share in his majesty." Aphrahat explains that the ultimate heavenly and at the same time earthly action is the incarnation of Jesus. The mystical ecstatic vision of the sage is set firmly within the context of the incarnation. This dual ascent/descent action is found and discussed in reference to the inner person praying in the previous chapter. Prayer involves a dual action both towards the heavens and down inside the person. It is expansive and contractive at the same time. As Dem. 23:59 describes, the majesty or literally great-ness of God is contracted, reduced, and shrunk

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⁶⁸⁷ D 23:59 (PS II/121.8–13) For the full quotation see page 142.

⁶⁸⁸ D 14:35 (PS I/664.10–16)

⁶⁸⁹ D 14:39 (PS I/684.8-10) Syriac on page 48.

⁶⁹⁰ See Chapter 3, p. 107.

⁶⁹¹ Cf. D 4:13 (PS I/165.6–11) "As I explained to you, the moment you start praying, raise your heart upwards and lower your eyes downwards; enter into your inner person and pray in secret to your Father in heaven." Syriac on page 109.

to the point where it can be "hidden" in the human heart. This then makes the recipient a temple of God. The vast and incomprehensible has become little and knowable through the incarnation and the indwelling of Christ's followers. The transcendent is now imminent.

B. McGinn proposes that there is a tension within apocalypse literature between the imminence and transcendence of the Divine; this idea is also applicable to Aphrahat's sage. McGinn suggests:

The God who reveals his secrets to the sage is paradoxically both nearer and farther away than the God of the prophets. He is nearer in the sense that some sages at least ascend to heaven to see and hear him and to bring his secrets back to the faithful. But he is also farther away, more transcendent, because his power over history is hidden in this age in which evil forces dominate and because he acts and reveals through intermediaries, the angelic powers to whose exuberant proliferation the apocalypses contributed so much in both Jewish and Christian history. 692

Aphrahat is a sage who fulfills McGinn's description of one who can ascend to heaven. Aphrahat's relationship with the Divine is immediate and imminent rather than with a far off and distant God. He emphasizes the closeness of God to the sage, be it he himself or Moses or some other person, in his four passages which describe an ascent to heaven. But he and other Jewish and Christian mystics take the apocalypse ascent a step further; it is also a descent into the heart where the divine dwells. A. Golitzin defines it as:

'interiorized apocalyptic,' the transposition of the cosmic setting of apocalyptic literature, and in particular of the 'out of body' experience of heavenly ascent and transformation, to the inner theater of the Christian soul, to 'the great world,' as Niketas puts it, borrowing from Gregory of Nazianzos, 'within the small.' 693

The great majesty of the divine is reduced to the smallest part of the person, the heart. There are overtones of the incarnation as well as temple imagery within the concept of the great within the small human.

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⁶⁹² Bernard McGinn, "John's Apocalypse and the Apocalyptic Mentality," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 9.

⁶⁹³ Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men," 141.

According to Aphrahat, the human temple with its altar within the heart is the point of meeting between the human and the divine. The ascent to heaven occurs with the descent of the mind into the heart. To use a modern metaphor, prayer from the heart allows for the "double clicking" on the heart hyperlink so the mind may ascend to heaven. The incarnation, the ultimate conjunction of ascent and descent, allows for this to happen. The greatness of God has been shrunk to the miniscule level of the heart. There is another layer of meaning in the Syriac to the "little heart" of the human temple which Aphrahat also plays upon, that is, the little heart may also be translated as the "feeble heart." The divine power is juxtaposed with the weakness and helplessness of the human being. In the incarnation, the rabbutā is united with the range surutā; the Divine is united with the person. By becoming temples of Christ, people have the divine power burrowing or hiding in the smallest and feeblest of places, the human heart. Aphrahat also calls himself Anton Zurutā, one who is weak, feeble, or little. 694 Through weakness, Christ's followers may become divinely strong. Through Christ's indwelling, people may become temples of the Divine Glory itself. This interchange of the Divine from the heavenly templum major to the earthly templum minor provides the conduit through which the person can break through into the realm of the Divine.

The mystical journey is one taken by a wise, humble, older man who, through prayer, is able to travel to the supernal temple and see the heavenly throne itself. Aphrahat himself is a type of Merkabah mystic. He writes of his own personal mystical ascent guided by Jesus himself. Aphrahat is writing within a mystical stream of thought which includes the likes of: 1 Enoch, the Talmudic Merkabah texts, the Liber Graduum, and Ephrem the Syrian. Aphrahat is not alone in his mystical focus upon the heavenly temple and sights contained therein. He also describes the ascent of "a sage" to heaven where the angelic host starts to worship him as though he were the enthroned one of Isaiah's vision. The sage is the model and example for all, including the ascetics who may be unable to ascend to the heights and see the throne in their thoughts. These ascetics come with many different titles: singles (ihidayê), Covenanters (bnay qyāmā), virgins (btulê), and holy ones (qaddishe). The goal of the Christian life is to become a temple of God. "Temple-ness" means being fully suffused with the divine. The greatness of God descends to the smallest of feeble creatures, the human being. It is then

⁶⁹⁴ D 22:26 (PS I/1049.1-4), for the full quotation see page 201.

when the sage encounters God within himself and then is taken to the heavens to see in the mind the temple and throne of God.

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CONCLUSION

Aphrahat the Persian Sage, writing over sixteen hundred years ago, provides the modern reader with a treasure trove of theological ideas, teachings, and imagery. He wrote the Demonstrations to solve a problem: there were those in his community who did not have a firm grounding in the Christian faith, and they were being derided by their Jewish contemporaries. 695 So Aphrahat created these works to be both pedagogical and polemical. His immediate goal may or may not have been fulfilled; we do not know. On the other hand, we do know that there was a secondary benefit—his works survive today. His writings provide us with a window to an author who personally saw God's treasure in heaven and who may teach us the importance of working towards becoming "God's temples" in our own lives. He is a mystic who functions within the mystical tradition of the Jewish Merkabah riders as well as those fellow Syrian Christians who also wrote about the faithful person becoming a divine temple. His theology is grounded in the Hebrew scriptures as well as the New Testament; however, his theology is not just book learning, he personally experiences mystical visions and the power of prayer. To summarize, in a rather crude vernacular phrase: the Sage "walks the walk, and talks the talk."

In this study, we examined Aphrahat's process of becoming a temple and the specifics associated with the temple imagery. In the opening chapter of this work the key elements of Aphrahat's temple theology were examined through the lenses of his use of Scripture, the image of Adam, christology, ecclesiology, and sacramentology. Through the fluid and expert use of the scriptures, Aphrahat weaves the supports for his argument that people may become divine temples. Five of the key verses he uses are: Jer 7:4–5, Lev 26:12, 1 Cor 3:16, 2 Cor 6:16, and John 14:20. The Hebrew scriptures from Jeremiah and Leviticus are the foundation for his argument which he then culminates with quotations from Paul and the gospel of John. The Sage follows Paul and a Syriac reading of Jeremiah to support his

⁶⁹⁵ Those who are called Jewish by Aphrahat could be the Adiabene Jews as Neusner suggests or converts in Aphrahat's community who are holding on to their Jewish traditions. Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism*, 148–149.

view that a person may become a temple of God.⁶⁹⁶ In order to become divine temples, the devout person must change from the sinful nature of Adam to following the heavenly Adam, Jesus Christ. The means by which one may do so is faith in Christ. It is through this faith that the false wisdom for which Adam craved in the garden is transformed into the true wisdom of Jesus. When one has faith in Jesus Christ, is purified, and Christ comes to dwell within, then the person is a temple. As the Sage writes in his last demonstration:

Your majesty burrows into the little heart, you have made of us temples wherein your glory dwells.⁶⁹⁷

The Divine is reduced to the level of the person, the macrocosm becomes a microcosm, the great becomes small, the mighty becomes feeble. This is the process of becoming God's temple. It also describes the incarnation of Jesus Christ. As God humbled himself in the incarnation, so too he humbles himself when he dwells within the devout person. The Christians gather in community to pray and participate in the sacraments of baptism and eucharist which is key for a person who wishes to become a divine temple. These are some of the means by which the divine may enter into the faithful. It is through the Spirit indwelling in oneself, the continued feeding on the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and a strict ascetic discipline that one may keep oneself as a temple.

In Chapter Two, "The Ascetics," we examined who, in Aphrahat's view, may become a temple of God. The celibate ascetics in the Sage's community are described with many different terms; the broadest category for these people is "Singles" ihidayē. There are three subcategories to the Singles: the "Covenanters" bnay qyāmā, the "Virgins" btulē, and the "Holy Ones" qaddishē. The Covenanters are both male and female ascetics who live within the city or town and serve the church. They are not separated from the greater community, nor are they clergy. Although some of the clergy may well have been Covenanters, not all Covenanters were clergy. The name Virgins is self explanatory. Some of the Covenanters were also virgins, but they could have also been members of the qaddishē or Holy Ones. The Holy Ones were married people who have agreed to abstain

⁶⁹⁶ Aphrahat uses especially Jer 7:4–5, Lev 26:12, 1 Cor 3:16, 2 Cor 6:16, and John 14:20.

⁶⁹⁷ D 23:59 (PS II/121.12–13)

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from marital relations to become completely dedicated to Christ. These terms are very flexible, and Aphrahat himself uses interchangeably Singles *ihidayē*, Covenanters *qyāmā*, and Virgins *btulē*. Those who are Singles, *ihidayē*, follow the life and example of the *Ihidayā*, Jesus Christ. These ascetics strive to be united with Christ, as his temples, both here on earth and after death.

In Chapter Three, "Being a Temple," Aphrahat's theological anthropology is explained through the motifs of inner person, heart, rest, and grieving the Spirit. Other authors' views on these subjects were also addressed, including Second Temple Jewish texts of Philo and Baruch, and fellow Syriac authors, such as: the Odist of The Odes of Solomon, the Liber Graduum author, Ephrem the Syrian, Macarius of Egypt, and Philoxenus of Mabbug. These texts show that Aphrahat uses popular themes and writes from a common mystical stream of thought infused by the Scriptures. We have in the *Demonstrations*, the inner person and the heart as both descriptive of where the Divine dwells in a person. During a person's mystical ascent to the heavens, the heart may ascend to the heavens while the inner person must remain with the body on earth. It is through the Spirit dwelling within the ascetic's heart that the whole being becomes a temple of God whose function is to offer up the sacrifice of prayer. However, prayer is not just a mental exercise; it is also charitable action. Aphrahat describes this active prayer as "giving the rest of the Spirit." If a person does not have a pure heart which can offer the sacrifices of prayer through action and contemplation, then the Holy Spirit may become "grieved" and leave the person. If the Spirit becomes grieved then He may leave the formerly holy person permanently; in which case, that abandoned person may become a temple for Satan. Aphrahat describes a person who is now Satan's temple in this way: "His heart is obscured and his intellect is dark. His mind is blinded and he gropes and stumbles."698 This description of the poor person under Satan's control is directly opposite to the way Aphrahat describes the sage's mind when it has ascended to heaven; the mind is able to see everything, and is not blind in any way.

Chapter Four, "The Sage 'may' see God," examined the ultimate reward for a person who is God's temple, that is, mystical ascent to heaven in this life. The sage, who is a divine temple, encounters God within himself and then is taken to the heavens to see the temple and throne of God. Aphrahat describes this mystical ascent of an ascetic in four passages of the *Demonstrations: Dem.* 18:4, *Dem.* 14:35, *Dem.* 23:59, and *Dem.* 10:8. The first

⁶⁹⁸ D 14:43 (PS I/701.2-4).

ascent passage is Dem. 18:4, Moses' ascent on Mt. Sinai. It is the paradigm on which Aphrahat bases his other descriptions. The second passage is Dem. 14:35 in which a sage, who is a "great temple for his Maker," sees God. The sage is able to see God by descending into his heart while his mind ascends to heaven. When the sage's mind is in the heavenly throne room, the angels start to worship the sage as though it were he who is enthroned. Aphrahat uses the collective pronouns for the third ascent passage in Dem. 23:59. His audience may be included in the mystical ascents, or at least, have a chance to participate in their own ascent at some point. This passage describes the great majesty of God reducing down to the size and level of the human heart so the person may become a temple. The fourth passage, Dem. 10:8, is a personal description of Aphrahat's own mystical ascent. He is an ascetic and sage who has experienced the heavenly throne first hand. Aphrahat's guide for his journey to heaven was Jesus himself, who showed him the King's treasury. Heavenly ascent is not some esoteric or odd custom that was done in bygone years. Aphrahat writes about his own personal experience of God, an experience in which he knows his audience may also participate, if they are pure and work hard enough. The sage does not expect his community to do anything he himself has not already done.

From these four ascent passages, four important themes emerge. They are:

(1) The sage is the person who may ascend to heaven. (2) The ascent occurs within the person who has become a temple. (3) Seeing God is the result of the ascent. (4) The actions of ascent and descent are simultaneous. The first theme highlighted the characters of the ascent "drama," the sages. They are the elite of Aphrahat's community; they are humble, wise, and older. They are those who may ascend to heaven in spirit and participate in the heavenly liturgy with the angels. The second theme was the setting for our ascent drama, the heavenly temple. Aphrahat works from the scriptural descriptions of the heavenly temple and the Jerusalem temple to describe the setting for the mystical ascents. This temple image is multidimensional; it includes the throne, angelic host, treasury, the person as a temple, and the heavens as the temple.

Themes three and four are the action of our ascent drama, that is, seeing God. For Aphrahat, the ideal result of becoming a divine temple is that the person may see God with the eyes of the mind while the body still remains on earth. The ascent to heaven is a mystical experience also described in *Merkabah* mysticism of the later Jewish tradition. Aphrahat writes within the same mystical stream of thought as the *Merkabah* riders. How-

ever, the Sage has his own polemical issues with the heavenly ascent descriptions; he is adamant that it is an ascent of the mind, not of the body. Aphrahat also avoids quoting 2 Cor 12:1–4, Paul's description of his mystical ascent. I suggest that this deliberate omission is because Aphrahat is refuting some unidentified opponents who used this passage for their own purposes. Aphrahat does not wish to use "ammunition" from the "other side." The fourth theme is of ascent and descent at the same time. The sage descends into his heart in order to ascend to the heavenly temple. The incarnation is the ultimate descent in order to ascend which allows for the sage to see heaven. Our drama has finally reached the end; the sage who is a divine temple has reached heaven, seen God, and returned to teach others.

My study continues the scholarly conversation about Syrian Christians and their possible interactions with Jewish mysticism. A future avenue of investigation stemming from my work would be an examination of post Second Temple Jewish texts that have temple, chariot, ascent, and throne imagery to see if there are many connections with the Syrians. Another avenue of future study would be to extend the analysis of temple imagery to see how this stream of thought continues after Aphrahat's time in the later Syrian authors, such as: Philoxenus of Mabbug, Isaac the Syrian, and Moshe bar Kepha. There may also be more correlations between later Syrian Christian authors and later Jewish mystical writings.

A few lingering questions arise from my work. How close were the ties between Aphrahat's community and the Jews in his area (assuming that he is writing from the territory around Mosul in modern day Iraq)? I think that Aphrahat did have some personal contact with his Jewish neighbors but to what extent I do not know. Another area to be explored is what exactly did Aphrahat have in his library? Were there other earlier Jewish and Christian writers on whose mystical works Aphrahat may have drawn? Aphrahat quotes from the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament extensively and many of his similar arguments and ideas to other authors stem from common sources. However, is the common ground between Aphrahat and others due to direct influence, i.e., did Aphrahat read Enoch, for example? Or is the Sage merely writing with common ideas that were taught in his community and "in the air." Although Aphrahat wrote with chronological specificity, he does not cite his non-scriptural sources. So some of these questions may be answered with a study of later Syriac writers to see where the stream in which Aphrahat functioned flows. But that is beyond the scope of my present study.

This book is the only comprehensive study of Aphrahat's temple imagery to date. The temple is central for both Jews and Christians; it is the

place of sacrifice, meeting, and communication with the Divine. Aphrahat has many continuities with Merkabah mysticism, foremost of which is that a person may experience a mystical ascent to heaven before death. In Aphrahat's various descriptions of mystical ascent, he uses Moses' experience at Sinai with the *Shekintā* as the paradigm for this experience, including the angelic host, throne, temple, awe, and trembling. Aphrahat even has a heavenly guide for his own journey, Jesus, who fulfills the role of Enoch's angelic guide in 1 Enoch. The greatest discontinuity between Aphrahat and his Jewish mystical forebearers is Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Aphrahat is a Christian who is working within the mystical framework of Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, but it is Jesus who is the guide and his Spirit who dwells within. Another discontinuity is his emphasis upon the mental aspects of the mystical ascent. There is no physical riding of the chariot to heaven in Aphrahat's view; one's feet are firmly planted on the earth, while one's mind is flying to the heavenly temple. It is fair to say that Aphrahat is a Christian Merkabah rider in his own right.

What can our fourth century pastor share with a twenty-first century flock? As a pastor, Aphrahat is familiar with the negative sides of humanity. He does not lose sight of human frailty; he knows that people are prone to anger, hatred, greed, pride, and all sorts of sinfulness. However, ultimately, Aphrahat's theological anthropology maintains that the person is a creature made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). Because of the Lord's self emptying in the incarnation (Phil 2:7), his follower may become a *locus* of the divine—a temple of God. The Lord's *kenosis* allows for the *theosis* of humanity. The person may then manifest the Spirit within, through love, humility, faith, and actions.

The greatest gift that Aphrahat shares with modern readers is hope, hope that a person may experience heaven today, here and now, on earth, before death. He shares the hope of the Gospel, that faith in Jesus Christ is fundamental for a Christian life. He shares his own experience of heaven and the gift of the King's treasury with his audience of 1600 years ago and with his audience today. In his polemical writings, he is more irenic than either Ephrem or John Chrysostom. He is also a great teacher of the Gospel and of prayer. He gives practical instructions for both contemplation and action. He teaches that today we can fulfill the beatitude from Matthew's Gospel, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." 699

⁶⁹⁹ Matt 5:8.

His prayer, mysticism, pastoral concerns, and pedagogy are as important today as they were in his own lifetime.

It is only appropriate to give the last words to the Sage himself. His words are fully applicable to my own study of him, as he writes concerning his own work:

As I am feeble, a man born from Adam and formed by the hands of God, a disciple of the Holy scriptures, I have written these things.⁷⁰⁰

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May his memory be eternal.

⁷⁰⁰ D 22:26 (PS I/1049.1–4).

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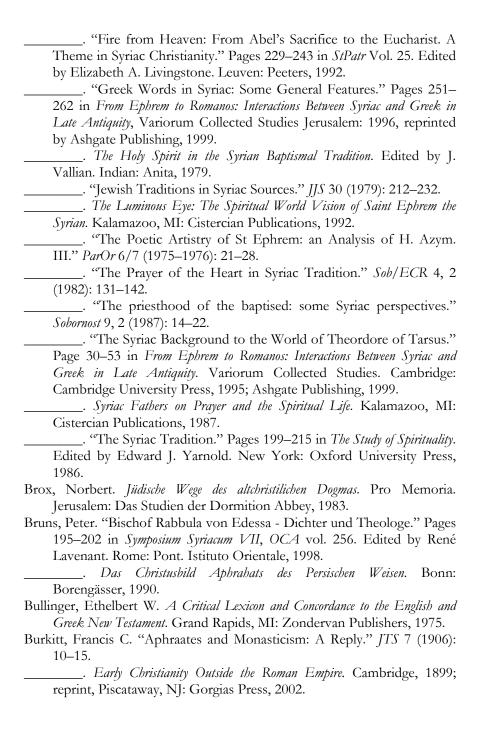
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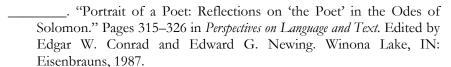
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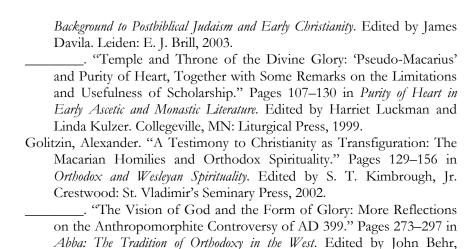
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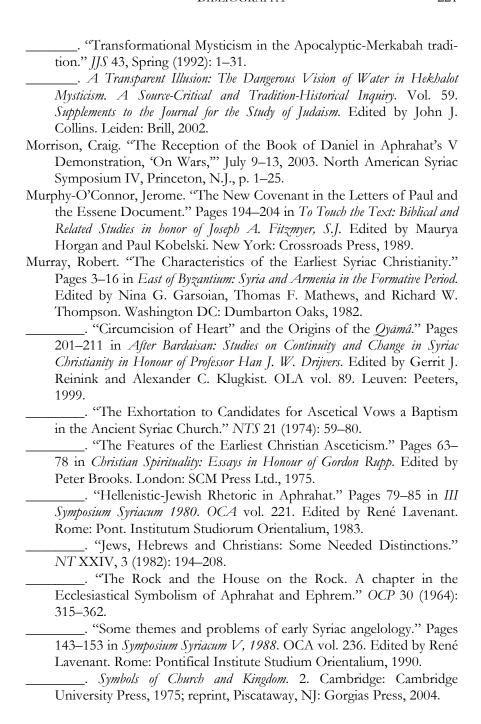
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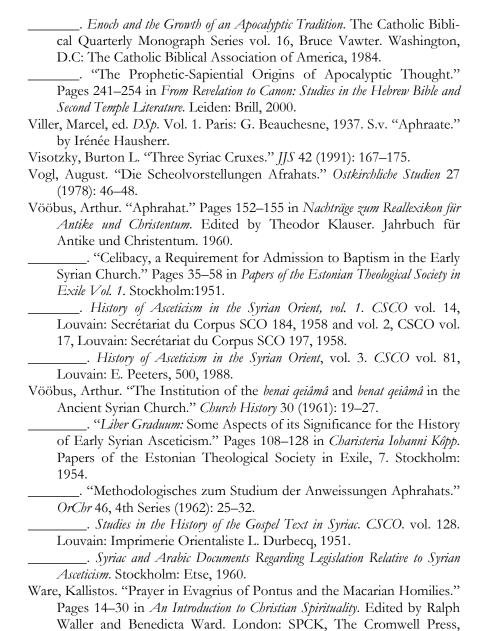
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