



JUDGMENT AND REVENGE: The Exodus Account in "Jubilees" 48

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JUDGMENT AND REVENGE:

The Exodus Account in *Jubilees* 48

Summary

This paper analyzes the Exodus account in *Jub.* 48 as a story of judgment and revenge. The Jubilean author reworks the two-fold promise given by God to Abraham in the Covenant between the Pieces in two units (vv. 2–8, 9–19) in order to demonstrate that the plagues constitute the “judgment” God pledges to bring upon the nation enslaving his descendants and that the Israelites would leave Egypt with great wealth. He further depicts Moses’ commissioning as serving to execute judgment upon the Egyptians, reinforcing the *Leitmotif* of “taking revenge.”

THE book of *Jubilees*—customarily dated to the second century B.C.E.—constitutes a retelling of the book of Genesis and the first section of Exodus. Its reworking of the Exodus account covers Exod 1–15 and comprises four chapters (*Jub.* 46–49).⁽¹⁾ *Jub.* 47–48, which lies at the center of this unit, comprises a narrative recounted to Moses by the Angel of the Presence describing events related to Moses’ personal history, from his birth to the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea.⁽²⁾ *Jub.* 48 possesses a special place

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(1) J. C. VanderKam, “The Origins and Purposes of the Book of Jubilees,” in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (TSAJ 65; ed. M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 3–24.

(2) *Jubilees* 46 interweaves the story of Joseph’s death (Gen 50) with the events related in Exod 1:1–14, to which are added legends concerning a war between Egypt and Canaan and Amram’s burial of his fathers in Hebron, while *Jub.* 49 focuses on

within these two chapters in relating to the salient features of Exod 2:15b–15—including Moses' dwelling in Midian, his commissioning by God, the “bridegroom of blood” episode, the plagues, the plunder of the Egyptians, and the crossing of the Red Sea.

Analyses of *Jub.* 48 are available in the various editions, translations, and commentaries of the text of *Jubilees* published to date.⁽³⁾ Several studies have also discussed the legends in *Jub.* 48 and their parallels in other ancient sources. The description of the plagues in *Jub.* 48 has likewise been briefly examined.⁽⁴⁾ More recently, a more

the laws of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Several studies have examined independent pericopae within *Jub.* 46–49. Halpern-Amaru has analyzed *Jub.* 46 and 49, and van Ruiten, VanderKam, and Werman *Jub.* 46 and 47: see B. Halpern-Amaru, “Burying the Fathers: Exegetical Strategies and Source Traditions in *Jubilees* 46,” in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran* (STDJ 58; ed. E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant, and R. A. Clements; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 135–52; idem, “The Use of Bible in *Jubilees* 49: The Time and Date of the Pesah Celebration,” *Meghillot* 5–6 (2008): *81–*100; idem, “The Festivals of Pesah and Massot in the Book of *Jubilees*,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of *Jubilees** (ed. G. Boccaccini and G. Ibba; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 309–22; J. van Ruiten, “Between Jacob's Death and Moses' Birth: The Intertextual Relationship between Genesis 50:15–Exodus 1:14 and *Jubilees* 46:1–16,” in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (SJSJ 122; ed. A. Hilhorst, É. Puech, and E. J. C. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 467–89; idem, “The Birth of Moses in Egypt According to the Book of *Jubilees* (Jub 47:1–9),” in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen* (ed. A. Hilhorst and G. H. van Kooten; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 43–65; idem, “Moses and His Parents: The Intertextual Relationship between Exodus 1:22–2:10 and *Jubilees* 47:1–9,” in *Rewritten Bible Reconsidered: Proceedings of the Conference in Karkku, Finland, August 24–26, 2006* (Studies in Rewritten Bible 1; ed. A. Laato and J. van Ruiten; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 43–78; J. C. VanderKam, “*Jubilees* 46:6–47:1 and 4QVisions of Amram,” *DSD* 17 (2010): 141–58; C. Werman, “The Book of *Jubilees* and its Aramaic Sources,” *Meghillot* 8–9 (2010): 135–74 (Hebrew). For a survey of the literature on *Jub.* 48, see below.

(3) Cf. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902), 249–53; K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen* (JSHRZ 2/3; Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1981), 542–46; O. S. Wintermute, “*Jubilees*: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 2:139–40; A. Caquot, “Jubilés,” in *La Bible: Écrits Intertestamentaires* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 801–3; J. C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (CSCO 510–11; Scriptores Aethiopici 87–88; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 1:242–45, 2:309–15.

(4) For the former, see Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 249–53; J. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: HUP, 1998), 543–612. For the latter, see S. E. Loewenstamm, *The Evaluation of the Exodus Tradition* (trans. B. J. Schwartz; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 108, 117, 126–28, 134. For discussions of the plague of the firstborn in *Jub.* 48:5, 49: 2–6, see *ibid.*, 200, 204–6, 211–13; A. Rofé, *The Belief in Angels in the Bible and in Early Israel* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1979), 2:163–64 (Hebrew); M. Segal, *The Book of Jubi-*

comprehensive investigation into Mastema's role in this chapter has also been conducted, the Jubilean author attributing a prominent role to the ruler of the evil spirits in all the events covered in the chapter.⁽⁵⁾ No scholarly investigation of the Jubilean author's representation of the Exodus narrative as a story of judgment and revenge has undertaken as of yet, however. The present article is offered as a modest contribution to the discussion of this issue. Herein, I survey some of the literary and exegetical features which reveal this exegesis. Following an analysis of the literary structure of *Jub.* 48, I shall proceed to an examination of the depiction of Moses' commissioning. Finally, I will discuss the theme of "revenge" as the *Leitmotif* of the chapter.⁽⁶⁾

A. The literary structure of *Jubilees* 48

As remarked above, *Jub.* 48 comprises a condensed, reworked version of the narrative of Exod 2:15b–15. Verse 1 presents a series of chronological data, including Moses' flight from and return to Egypt and the length of his sojourn in Midian. Verses 2–4, which cover Moses' commissioning and the "bridegroom of blood" incident, describe Prince Mastema's attempt to kill Moses and thus prevent him from bringing the plagues upon the Egyptians. The depiction of the plagues in verses 5–8 concludes with the statement that they were brought upon Egypt in accordance with the promise God made in His covenant with Abraham (v. 8).

The following section—verses 9–19—contains three episodes based on the various biblical accounts of the Israelites encounters with

lees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology (JSJSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 210–14, 223–27.

(5) Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 203–28. See also van Goudoever's brief discussion of calendrical issues in *Jub.* 48: J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 68–69.

(6) Although fourteen Hebrew manuscripts of *Jubilees* were found at Qumran, very little (if any) of *Jub.* 48 has been preserved in Hebrew (see 4Q222 3 [= *Jub.* 48:5?]). This may be due to the fact, being one of the final chapters of the composition, it was probably copied relatively close to the edge of the scroll, making it vulnerable to any damage suffered by the latter: cf. H. Stegemann, "Methods for the Reconstruction of Scrolls from Scattered Fragments," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin* (JSPSup 8; JSOT/ASOR Monographs 2; ed. L.H. Schiffman; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 189–220. The full text of *Jub.* 48—and the composition as a whole—has been preserved only in Ge'ez. As VanderKam has demonstrated, this translation closely reflects the Hebrew original: see J.C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 91–95. Herein, we rely upon his critical edition of the Ge'ez text (VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*). The English translation of *Jubilees* here follows VanderKam (*ibid.*).

the Egyptians. The author of *Jubilees* reorders these incidents and presents them as a contest between Prince Mastema and the Angels of the Presence. In the first scene, Prince Mastema aids the Egyptian magicians while God and the Angels of the Presence limit their own intervention (vv. 9–12a). In the second, Prince Mastema encourages the Egyptians to pursue the Israelites, who are divinely delivered (vv. 12b–14, 16–17). In the third, Prince Mastema's binding by the Angels of the Presence enables the Israelites to plunder the Egyptians (vv. 15, 18–19).(7)

These narratives form a well-defined literary pericope. Verse 1 serves as the introduction to the chapter, *Jubilees* typically indicating the commencement of a new literary unit by introducing chronological data (cf. *Jub.* 47:1, 49:1). The details given in this verse link it to the wider context of the composition and set it within a broad chronological framework.(8) In its brief summary of Moses' flight to Midian,

(7) Segal questions the unity of the chapter, asserting that *Jub.* 48:17b ("They were made stubborn by the Lord our God so that he could strike the Egyptians and throw them into the sea") contradicts *Jub.* 48:12 ("...the Prince of Mastema ... cried out to the Egyptians to pursue you") and therefore constitutes a secondary addition (*The Book of Jubilees*, 217–22). This argument overlooks the following factors, however: 1) These verses are not in fact contradictory: while God stiffens their hearts, Prince Mastema only urges and encourages the Egyptians to follow the Israelites. While Mastema's act parallels God's it thus differs in nature; 2) The tension between Prince of Mastema's complicity with the divine plan—as implied here—and his attempt to foil it appears to be an integral function of the dualistic worldview attested in other writings found at Qumran. This concept holds the evil angels responsible for malicious deeds at the same time as being subordinate to God and serving as divine instruments (cf. 4Q225 1 3 vis-à-vis 4Q225 2 i 9–10 and ii 5–7; and CD 4:12–19, 8:2 vis-à-vis 5:18): see M. Kister, "On Good and Evil: The Theological Foundations of the Qumran Community," in *The Qumran Scrolls and Their World* (ed. M. Kister; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2009), 2:497–515 (Hebrew). Even if Segal's arguments regarding the secondary nature of *Jub.* 48:17b are accepted, the analysis of the literary features of the chapter presented below remains unaffected.

(8) The data are also significant for understanding the events of Moses' personal history. V. 1 reveals that Moses dwelt in Midian "five weeks and one year"—i.e., thirty-six years. Other dates (cf. *Jub.* 47:1, 7, 12) indicate that forty-two years elapsed between his birth and his flight from Egypt. Moses' life thus appears to be divided into three symmetrical periods, two of which are measured by "weeks"—i.e., are multiples of seven: 1) the period between his birth and his flight from Egypt comprises forty-two years; 2) he dwells in Midian for thirty-five years plus one; 3) the remainder of his life – from his commissioning [?] to his death is forty-two years (cf. *Jub.* 50:4; Deut 34:7). *Jubilees* thus appears to constitute an early witness to a three-fold chronological scheme of Moses' life. See Andrei's similar conclusion, although she suggests a slightly different subdivision (42/38/40 years): O. Andrei, "The 430 Years of Ex. 12:40, From Demetrius to Julius Africanus: A Study in Jewish and Christian Chronography," *Hen* 18 (1996), 27–28, n. 90. It should be noted that, according to *Jub.* 47:12, 48:1 (cf. Exod 7:7), Moses spent two years travelling from and/or to Egypt. The lack of specification of the length of the journey in each direction permits various

his sojourn there, and his return to Egypt (*Jub.* 48:1; cf. *Exod* 2:15b–4:23), v. 1 also functions as a bridge linking two narratives occurring in different phases of Moses' life: Moses' killing of the Egyptian (*Jub.* 47:10–12; *Exod* 2:11–15) and his commissioning (*Jub.* 48:2–4; *Exod* 3:1–4:26).⁽⁹⁾ It thus serves as a preparatory resumé introducing Moses' commissioning and its fulfillment, two of the principal themes of *Jub.* 48.

Following the introduction in v. 1, two primary literary units can be discerned within the chapter: vv. 2–8 and 9–19.⁽¹⁰⁾ As I shall demonstrate below, the opening and concluding verses of these two units are indicated by thematic and linguistic markers. The literary structure also possesses a specific exegetical function, framing the Exodus story as a fulfillment of the covenantal promise given to Abraham: "Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years; but I will execute judgment on the nation they shall serve, and in the end they shall go free with great wealth" (*Gen* 15:13–14).⁽¹¹⁾

The two pericopes, vv. 2–8 and vv. 9–19, both commence with a statement addressed directly by the Angel of the Presence to Moses, describing Prince Mastema's intention to harm him in similar language. The description "You know ... what the Prince of Mastema wanted to do to you... Did he not wish with all his strength to kill you and to save the Egyptians from your power?" (*Jub.* 48:2–3) is thus paralleled in verse 9: "The Prince of Mastema would stand up against you and wish to make you fall into Pharaoh's power" (*Jub.* 48:9). In

exegeses of the chronological data. For a division of Moses' life into three periods of forty years, see *Sipre Deut.* 357, *Gen. Rab.* 100:10, and *Acts* 7:23, 30.

(9) Unlike the biblical Exodus account, *Jubilees* fails to mention the meeting between Moses and Jethro's daughters by the well. Nor does its author inform his readers that Moses married Zipporah (cf. *Exod* 2:15–3:1)—an omission possibly reflecting the author's discomfort with regard to intermarriage: see B. Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 124–25.

(10) Various scholars recognize the existence of different literary units within *Jub.* 48. Caquot ("Jubilés," 801–3) argues for two principal pericopae (vv. 1–8 and 9–19). Although both Hartom and Wintermute identify three primary units, they disagree as to the verses these include (vv. 1–4, 5–11, 12–19 versus vv. 1–4, 5–8, 9–19): E.S. Hartom, "The Book of Jubilees," in *The Apocryphal Literature* (3d ed.; Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1969), 5:209 (Hebrew); Wintermute, "Jubilees," 139–40. Berger, on the other hand, identifies four principal units within the chapter: vv. 1–4, 5–8, 9–11, and 12–19 (*Das Buch der Jubiläen*, 542). These suggestions all appear to relate to *substantive* considerations, although none of the scholars explicitly explain the grounds on which they make their determination. The delineation of the second unit proposed here parallels Wintermute's third and Caquot's second section (vv. 9–19).

(11) All biblical quotations are taken from the NJPS unless otherwise indicated. The biblical references following the Jubilean verses indicate the biblical source of the latter.

both cases, the statement concerning Mastema's malicious intent is followed by a declaration by the Angel(s) of Presence that (t)he(y) provided assistance to Moses (*Jub.* 48:4, 10–11). In addition, the two units both conclude with the assertion that the events of the Exodus were brought upon the Egyptians in retribution for the fact that "they were enslaving Israel with force." The latter phrase appears twice, in vv. 8 and 18. I propose that these concluding verses are central to the reworked Exodus story in *Jubilees*, as I shall now undertake to demonstrate through an assessment of their role in the reworked version.

Jubilees 48:8 explicitly notes that the plagues constitute a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham: "The Lord did everything for the sake of Israel and in accord with his covenant which he made with Abraham to take revenge on them just as they were enslaving them with force." The covenant referred to in this verse is that which God made with Abraham "between the pieces" (Gen 15:13–14).⁽¹²⁾ While the words: "his covenant which he made with Abraham" (*Jub.* 48:8) allude to Gen 15:18: "... the LORD made a covenant with Abram" (cf. Ps 105:8–9), the phrase "they were enslaving them with force" (*Jub.* 48:8) evidently alludes to Exod 1:13: "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour" (KJV).⁽¹³⁾ In the context of *Jub.* 48:8, the statement also clearly echoes the prediction given in the Covenant between the Pieces: "... and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years" (Gen 15:13).

(12) As already noted by Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 251. The prediction of retribution in God's covenant with Abraham is already explicitly identified as the primary contributing cause behind the Exodus in Ps 105:42–43 (cf. Exod 2:24, 6:5). As I shall demonstrate below, *Jubilees* develops this notion by specifying the precise episodes within the Exodus account which correlate to the two-fold promise given to Abraham. The pericope of the Covenant between the Pieces is reworked in *Jub.* 14:1–20 and includes a citation of Gen 15:13–14 (see *Jub.* 14:13–14). Notably, "footprints" from Gen 15 are traceable in other literary units throughout *Jubilees*. In addition to *Jub.* 48 discussed above, an allusion to Gen 15:2 appears in the context of the feast held on the day of Isaac's weaning (*Jub.* 17:2, cf. Gen 21:8–12); while allusions to Gen 15:7 are knitted into the reworking of Abraham's initial arrival in Canaan (*Jub.* 13:7, cf. Gen 12:5–9) and Abraham's blessing (*Jub.* 22:27). For the latter, see Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 143; Wintermute, "Jubilees," 99. Cf. also the depiction of the Amorites in *Jub.* 29:11 which echoes Gen 15:16 and the story of Abraham and the ravens, which may draw on Gen 15 (cf. *Jub.* 11:19 to Gen 15:11): see M.P. Knowles, "Abram and the Birds in Jubilees 11: A Subtext for the Parable of the Sower?," *NTS* 41 (1995): 145–51; J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 46–47; C. D. Crawford, "On the Exegetical Function of the Abraham/Ravens Traditions in Jubilees 11," *HTR* 97 (2004): 91–97.

(13) רַעֲבָדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכֹחַ. LXX: καὶ κατεδυνάστευσον οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ βίᾱ ("And the Egyptians tyrannised over the children of Israel by force").

The Jubilean author's understanding of the plagues as comprising the fulfillment of this prophecy is facilitated by his perception of a conceptual analogy between the depiction of the plagues as שפטים ("judgments") in Exodus (6:6, 7:4) and the "judgment" spoken of in Genesis 15:14: "I will execute judgment (דן אֵנִי) on the nation they shall serve."¹⁴ This exegesis is further emphasized by the designation of the plagues as "judgment" (*kʿannane*)(¹⁵) in *Jub.* 48:3—a theme to which I shall return below.¹⁶

Whereas v. 8—which concludes the first literary unit—deals with the plagues, vv. 18–19—which constitute the end of the second pericope—describe the despoiling of the Egyptians: "... they were requesting utensils and clothing from the Egyptians—utensils of silver, utensils of gold, and utensils of bronze; and so that they could plunder the Egyptians in return for the fact that they were made to work when they enslaved them by force." While v. 18 paraphrases Exod 12:35–36: "The Israelites ... borrowed from the Egyptians objects of silver and gold, and clothing ... thus they stripped the Egyptians,"¹⁷ v. 19—"We did not bring the Israelites out of Egypt empty-handed"—constitutes an evident allusion to the second part of God's promise in Gen 15:14b: "... and in the end they shall go free

14) Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, 549–51. As used in Exodus, the term שפטים ("judgments") also designates the judgments against the gods of Egypt (Exod 12:12; cf. Num 33:4): see section C below.

(15) The Ge'ez word *kʿannane*—which signifies "rule, judgment, punishment"—is better translated as "judgment" (cf. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 249–53; Wintermute, "Jubilees," 2:139–40; Caquot, "Jubilés," 801–3) than "punishment" (VanderKam) here, given its better reflection of the Hebrew שפטים apparently echoed in the Jubilean Exodus account. Cf. Goldmann's Hebrew translation, which also renders *kʿannane* by the Hebrew שפטים: M. Goldmann, "The Book of Jubilees," *The Apocryphal Books* (ed. A. Kahana; Tel Aviv: Masada, 1956), 2:309 (Hebrew). For *kʿannane*, see W. Leslau, *Concise Dictionary of Ge'ez* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 155.

(16) See section B below. An understanding of the plagues as the fulfillment of the covenantal promise to Abraham is evident in other ancient Jewish texts: cf. 4Q225 1 3–4; 'Abot R. Nat. A 13; *Gen. Rab.* 44:19, 20.

(17) Cf. Exod 3:22, 11:3. *Jub.* 48:19 differs from all these biblical verses as regard to the list of items borrowed from the Egyptians. The structure—a general statement ("they were requesting utensils and clothing") followed by detailed particulars ("utensils of silver, utensils of gold, and utensils of bronze") is unique to *Jub.*—as is the addition of "utensils of bronze" to the "objects of silver and gold (כלי כסף וזהב)" referred to in Exod 3:22, 11:3, 12:35–36. This insertion may have been inspired by the common use and/or descriptions of the usage of these three precious metals for similar purposes, such as minting coins, or as among the items contributed to the Temple (Ezra 8:25–28; cf. Exod 25:3). It may also reflect the textual influence of verses in which they are listed together: cf. 2 Sam 8:10: "Joram brought with him articles of silver, gold, and bronze (כלי כסף וזהב וכלי נחשת)" (cf. also Josh 6:19). For their joint mention in the scrolls, see 1QM 5:5, 8.

(אֲשֶׁר) with great wealth.” It also recalls God’s words to Moses at the burning bush: “And I will dispose the Egyptians favorably toward this people, so that when you go, you will not go away empty-handed” (Exod 3:21). In alluding to and interweaving these two prophecies, the Jubilean reworking of the biblical text implies not only that the covenantal promise fulfilled but that Moses’ words also came to fruition.⁽¹⁸⁾ The latter idea is explicitly expressed in *Jub.* 48:6–7: “Everything was sent through you, before it was done, so that you should do [it] ... Everything happened by your word.”⁽¹⁹⁾

The fact that the author of *Jubilees* appears to have perceived the plunder of the Egyptians as the fulfillment of the divine promise given to Abraham suggests that the two units comprising this chapter relate to the two parts of the divine promise in Gen 15:14.⁽²⁰⁾ The first pericope (*Jub.* 48: 2–8) concludes with the fulfillment of the promised judgments (Gen 15:14a), the second (*Jub.* 48: 9–19) with the fulfillment of the pledge that the people would leave Egypt “with great wealth” (Gen 15:14b).⁽²¹⁾ The structure of the chapter thus highlights the Jubilean author’s interpretation of the Exodus as a fulfillment of the judgment predicted in the Covenant between the Pieces.”⁽²²⁾

B. Moses’ commissioning

The condensed style in which the Exodus story is retold in *Jub.* 48 also characterizes the book’s description of Moses’ commissioning. The episode of the burning bush is referred to in *Jub.* 48:2: “You know what was said to you at Mt. Sinai,” the nature of the commission being described as follows: “...you were sent to carry out judgment and revenge against the Egyptians ... You per-

(18) Exod 11:3, 12:36 also incorporates parts of the burning bush incident (Exod 3:21a, 22), thereby indicating that the prophecy given there was fulfilled in detail.

(19) For Moses’ prophetic role in *Jub.* 48, see section B below.

(20) Cf. Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagōgē* 162–66; Philo, *Mos.* 141; *Exod. Rab.* 3:11; Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, 555–57.

(21) According to Exod 3:20–22, the prophecy given to Moses at the burning bush portrays God’s future deeds during the Exodus as comprising two elements: the plagues and the plunder of the Egyptians. These two details—and the order in which they are mentioned—are also reflected in *Jub.* 48. The first unit in this chapter concludes with the plagues, the second with the despoiling of the Egyptians. It remains uncertain, however, whether Exod 3:20–22 directly influenced the structure of *Jub.* 48.

(22) The reference to the Covenant between the Pieces (Gen 15:14) may explain why the Jubilean reworking climaxes with the plundering of the Egyptians rather than with the crossing of the sea (*Jub.* 48:12–19 vis-à-vis Exod 12–15).

formed the signs and the miracles which you were sent to perform in Egypt against Pharaoh, all his house, his servants, and his nation" (*Jub.* 48:3–4).(23) This passage is a reworking of Deut 34:11–12: "... for the various signs and portents that the LORD sent him to display in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his courtiers and his whole country, and for all the great might and awesome power that Moses displayed before all Israel."(24) These verses contain parallel statements depicting Moses' commissioning as being responsible for the falling of the plagues upon the Egyptians—the words "great might and awesome power" (Deut 34:12) referring to the "signs and portents" (Deut 34:11).(25) While *Jubilees* 48:3–4 preserves this parallel structure, it elaborates the statement "sent to perform signs and miracles in Egypt" (*Jub.* 48:4; Deut 34:11) by stating that Moses was "sent to carry out *judgment and revenge* on the Egyptians" (*Jub.* 48:3; italics added).

As noted above, according to the biblical account, the term "judgments (שפטים)" designates the plagues (Exod 6:6, 7:4). In his reworking of the story, the author of *Jubilees* elucidates this term by employing the compound phrase "judgment and revenge."(26) These two nouns occur together with a similar meaning in Ezek 25 in a description of God's punishment of the nations (Ezek 25:11 vis-à-vis v. 17; cf. v. 14).(27) The Septuagint also already understood them as syno-

(23) In contrast to VanderKam's translation, based upon the Latin text: "You know who spoke to you ..." (*The Book of Jubilees*, 2:309), but in accordance with other translations: cf. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 250; Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen*, 542; Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 139.

(24) For the formula at the end of *Jub.* 48:4—"Pharaoh, all his house, his servants and his nation"—cf. also Exod 8:4–7, 25–27.

(25) Cf. the conjunction of these phrases in the depiction of the plagues in Deut 4:34, 26:8 and Jer 32:4: see J.H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS; Philadelphia: JPS, 1996), 340. In contrast, *Tg. Ps.-J.* (to Deut 34:11–12) and early midrashim (cf. *Sipre* Deut 357; *Mid. Tann.* Deut. 32.12; 'Abot R. Nat. A 2) understand Deut 34:12 as referring to other events, such as the splitting of the sea and the breaking of the tablets.

(26) This compound also appears in *Jub.* 30:18, where it relates to Levi's deeds following Dinah's rape. Although the meaning of the phrase in *Jub.* 30:18 differs from the sense it carries in *Jub.* 48:3, it nonetheless draws the reader's attention to the affinity between the two narratives, the Gentiles (i.e., the Hivites and Egyptians) treating the Israelites wickedly and therefore being sentenced to judgment by God.

(27) The semantic affinity between the roots שפט and נקם is likewise reflected in Ps 149:7–9, another account of divine punishment: "to execute vengeance on the nations ... to execute on them the judgment decreed." The two roots appear in parallel in 1QS 5:12, also being combined in 11Q13 2:13 (Peshier Melchizedek), which speaks of the punishment of Belial and his lot. For a survey of biblical parallel synonyms employed as compounds phrase in Qumran, see Y. Avishur, "Zugot milim niphradot min hamiqra hametzmadot kesmichuyot bemegilot midbar yehuda uve-mishley Ben Sirā," *Beit Miqra* 20 (1975): 511–29 (Hebrew).

nymy, frequently rendering both by the Greek ἐκδίκησις.(28) In light of this usage, the Jubilean conjunction “judgment and revenge” may represent a synonymic repetition referring to the plagues, in a similar style to the phrase “signs and miracles” (*Jub.* 48:4).(29)

In selecting Deuteronomy 34:11 as his source for describing Moses’ commissioning, the author of *Jubilees* defines Moses’ central role in the Exodus as the bringing of the plagues upon the Egyptians rather than the Israelites’ deliverance from Egyptian bondage.(30) He then explains the plagues as constituting “judgment and revenge,” thereby portraying Moses as executing divine punishment upon the Egyptians.(31) Moses also possesses a further significant role here as the “herald” of the ten plagues: “Everything was sent through you (lit.: by your hand), before it was done, so that you should do (it). You were speaking with the king of Egypt and in front of all his servants and his people. Everything happened by your word. Ten great and severe judgments came to the land of Egypt so that you could take revenge on it for Israel” (*Jub.* 48:6–7). This passage is based on various biblical passages concerning Moses’ mission (cf. esp. Exod 4:28, 6:10–13, 29),(32) combined with others indicating the fulfillment of his words—“So Pharaoh’s heart stiffened ... just as the LORD had foretold through Moses (בִּיד מֹשֶׁה ‘כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה’” (Exod 9:35); “... not a single word has failed of all the gracious promises that He made through His servant Moses (אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בִּיד מֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ)” (Kgs 8:56)—and his description as a “true prophet” (cf. Deut 18:15–22).

According to the biblical Exodus account, Moses’ words to Pharaoh refer to two related aspects. The first comprises the plea: “Let my people go!,” the second predicting the falling of the plagues. While *Jub.* 48 does not specify the content of Moses’ speech to Pharaoh,

(28) LXX Ezek 25:11, 17. Cf. also LXX Exod 7:4, 12:12 vis-à-vis Num 31:2; Ps 149:7.

(29) The word “vengeance” in the first half of *Jub.* 48:5 may also refer specifically to the plagues: see section C below.

(30) Cf. the depiction of Moses’ commissioning in Exod 3:10: “Come, therefore, I will send you to Pharaoh, and you shall free my people, the Israelites, from Egypt”; cf. also Exod 6:10–13.

(31) The description of Moses as executing the judgments (*Jub.* 48:3–4) deviates from the following verses wherein *God* is depicted as being responsible for bringing the plagues upon the Egyptians (*Jub.* 48:5, 8, 11). Following Segal (*The Book of Jubilees*, 210 n. 22), and *contra* Loewenstamm (*Evaluation*, 134–35), the tradition that God himself brings the plagues upon the Egyptians does not appear to be subsidiary in *Jubilees* 48.

(32) The detail that Moses spoke to Pharaoh “in front of all his servants and his people” (*Jub.* 48:6) may derive from such verses as Exod 7:10–12, 20, which indicate the presence of slaves during Aaron and Moses’ exchange with Pharaoh. For the formula “his servants and his people,” see n. 24.

the description of their delivery and fulfillment is sandwiched between two depictions of the plagues (vv. 5, 7). Hereby, the prediction of the plagues—rather than Israel’s deliverance—is determined as the primary context. The sequence of v. 7—“Everything happened by your word. Ten great and severe judgments came to the land of Egypt”—further implies that the plagues constitute the fulfillment of Moses’ words.⁽³³⁾ In this way, the Jubilean author emphasizes Moses’ *prophetic* role—specifically, his prediction to Pharaoh and his people regarding the judgments that would fall upon the Egyptians.⁽³⁴⁾

C. Revenge as a *Leitmotif* of Jubilees 48

The biblical account represents the plagues, the judgment against the gods of Egypt, and the plunder and drowning of the Egyptians as proof of God’s power (cf. Exod 7:5, 10:1–2, 14:4, 18)—or, alternatively, as events intended to cause God’s fame to resound throughout the world (cf. Exod 9:16). The Jubilean author ignores both these themes and introduces a different topic as the *Leitmotif* of his reworking of the Exodus story—namely, that of “revenge.” As analyzed in the previous section, the notion of vengeance forms a key theme in the Jubilean depiction of Moses’ commissioning. In the Ge’ez text of *Jub.* 48, the root *bql*—signifying “to take vengeance”—occurs no less

(33) Although the phrase “Ten great and severe judgments” is unique to *Jub.* 48:7, its individual components are attested in the Bible, also recalling Deut 6:22: “The LORD displayed before our eyes great and awesome signs and wonders against Egypt” (NRSV). For שפטים גדולים, cf. Exod 6:6, 7:4 (as well as the occurrence of this phrase in the Qumran scrolls: 1QS 5 12; 1QH 7 32 [15 19]). For שפטי הרעים, cf. Ezek 14:21.

(34) Cf. also Num 12:6–8; Deut 34:9. This role is further emphasized in the prologue of *Jubilees*: see G. J. Brooke, “Exegetical Strategies in Jubilees 1–2: New Light from 4QJubilees^a,” in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (ed. M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 44–45. Moses’ prophetic role is also highlighted in various Qumran compositions (cf. CD 5:21–6:1; 1QS 1:3; 4Q377 2 ii 5–12): see D. Falk, “Moses,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam; Oxford: OUP, 2000), 1:576–77; G.G. Xeravits, *King, Priest, Prophet: Positive Eschatological Protagonists of the Qumran Library* (STDJ 47; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 174–84; G. J. Brooke, “Moses in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Looking at Mount Nebo from Qumran,” in *La Construction de la figure de Moïse* (Supplément n° 13 à Transeuphratène; ed. T. Römer; Paris: Gabalda, 2007), 212–13, 220–21; A. P. Jassen, *Mediating the Divine: Prophecy and Revelation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism* (STDJ 68; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 37–63, 113–28. Cf. the similar emphasis in Josephus’ account of the Exodus: “... dreadful sufferings overtook the Egyptians, each of which I relate ... because I desire to show that Moses was not mistaken in any of the things that he predicted ...” (*Ant.* 2.293 [Feldman, LCL]).

than six times (vv. 3, 5 [x 2], 7, 8, 14).⁽³⁵⁾ Since the biblical pericope contains no incidences of the parallel Hebrew root נקם, the question must be asked: How did “vengeance” become the *Leitmotif* of the Exodus account in *Jubilees*?

As indicated above (section B), the linguistic basis on which the author of *Jubilees* reinterpreted the biblical account of the Exodus appears to be the semantic affinity between the terms “judgments” and “revenge.” In concurrence with the note that the phrase “judgment and revenge” in *Jub.* 48:3 may refer to the plagues, the terms “judgments” and “vengeance” also appear in conjunction in v. 7. Here, the revenge most likely signifies the *purpose* of the plagues rather than the source of their instigation: “Ten great and severe judgments came to the land of Egypt *so that* you could take revenge on it for Israel” (*Jub.* 48:7; italics added). The close similarity between “judgment” and “revenge” is also implied in verse 5: “The Lord effected a great *revenge* against them on account of Israel. He struck them and killed them with blood, frogs, gnats, dog flies, bad sores which break out in blisters; (and he struck) their cattle with death; and with hailstones—with these he annihilated everything that was growing for them; with locusts which ate whatever was left for them from the hail; with darkness; (and with the death of) their first-born of men and cattle. The Lord took *revenge* on all their gods and burned them up” (*Jub.* 48:5; italics added).

This verse opens and concludes with the motif of revenge. The first reference relates to the detailed description of the plagues that follows.⁽³⁶⁾ The wording—“The Lord effected a great revenge against them”—recalls Ezek 25:17: “I will execute great vengeance on them” (NRSV), a prophecy describing the God’s wrath against the Philistines in terms of “revenge” (cf. Ezek 25:15). Ascribing this statement to the Egyptians (rather than to the Philistines) does not necessarily represent a bold exegetical move of the Jubilean author, the Egyptians’ destiny being depicted in similar terms of revenge in

(35) As Berger notes, although he does not discuss the issue further (*Das Buch der Jubiläen*, 542).

(36) A fragment of the depiction of the ten plagues in *Jub.* 48:5 may be preserved in 4Q222 3 2–3: כל [אשר פרח פרחים ובארבה אשר אכל את היתר הנשאר להם] מהברד ובחושך ובבכורי [האדם] ו[הבהמה]. See J.C. VanderKam and J.T. Milik, “222. 4QJubilees⁸,” in *Qumran Cave 4 VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* (DJD 13; ed. H. Attridge et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 87–94. For a discussion of the list of plagues in *Jub.* 48:5, see Loewenstamm, *Evaluation*, 108–9. While Loewenstamm (ibid) and Segal (*The Book of Jubilees*, 211, n. 24) maintain that the number and order of the plagues in *Jub.* 48:5 follows that given in the book of Exodus, the order in fact differs: whereas in Exod 9:1–12 the boils are mentioned after the pestilence afflicting the livestock, this order is reversed in *Jub.* 48:5.

Jer 46:10: “But that day shall be for the Lord GOD of Hosts a day when He exacts retribution from His foes (יָיִם נִקְמָה לְהִנָּקֵם מִצָּרָיו).” (37) *Jub.* 48:5a sets the language of vengeance drawn from prophecies against foreign nations in a new historical context, however, namely, the Exodus. A similar line of interpretation also occurs at the conclusion of *Jub.* 48:5.(38) There, the term “revenge” refers to another event associated with the Exodus, namely, God’s justice against the Egyptian gods. Exod 12:12 describes the divine act as “judgments (שְׁפָטִים)”: “On all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments” (NRSV; cf. Num 33:4). The Jubilean author gives a more precise and detailed portrait of the form this judgment/revenge took: “[The Lord] burned them up.” The source of this interpretation derives principally from two prophecies concerning Egypt: “... I will set fire to Egypt ... I will execute acts of judgment on Egypt (בְּמִצְרַיִם שְׁפָטִים)” (Ezek 30:14–19)(39) and “And I will set fire to the temples of the

(37) Cf. Jeremiah’s prophecy against Babel (Jer 50:15, 28) and Ezekiel’s against Edom (Ezek 25:12, 14), both of which depict the fate of these nations in terms of “revenge.”

(38) The Jubilean author also adopts themes and terminology from various prophecies against surrounding peoples in order to describe the destiny of other nations—such as Amon and Moab (*Jub.* 16:9; cf. Jer 48; Zeph 2:9), the Philistines (*Jub.* 24:28–32; cf. Jer 47:4–7), and Edom (*Jub.* 36:9–11; cf. Jer 49:7–21). For an analysis of the passage referring to the Philistines’ fate, see M. Kister, “Biblical Phrases and Hidden Biblical Interpretations and *Pesharim*,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 28–29; C. Werman, “The Attitude Toward Gentiles in the Book of Jubilees and Qumran Literature Compared with Early Tanaic Halakha and Contemporary Pseudepigrapha” (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1995), 155–57 (Hebrew).

(39) A reworking of the prophecy against Egypt from Ezek 30:1–19 is also attested in *Pseudo-Ezekiel* (4Q385b; 4Q386 1 ii 5–6 [?]). Unlike *Jub.* 48, however, the context of Ezekiel’s ministry in this composition is eschatological: see D. Dimant, “Pseudo-Ezekiel,” in *Qumran Cave 4 XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (DJD 30; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 7–90. Significantly, other passages from Ezekielian oracles against the nations are reworked in sectarian writings: see 1QH 14:7–20 (cf. Ezek 31:3–16); 4QMidrEschat^b IX 13–14 (=4Q177:7 3 + 9:6) (cf. Ezek 25:8). In contrast to *Jubilees*, however, these reworkings relate to the Qumran community itself rather than to the destiny of the surrounding nations. For the use of Ezekiel in the Dead Sea Scroll, see F. García Martínez, “L’Interprétation de la torah d’Ézéchiél dans les MSS de Qumran,” *RevQ* 13 (1988): 441–52; G.J. Brooke, “Ezekiel in Some Qumran and New Testament Texts,” in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18–21 March 1991* (ed. J. Trabolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 317–38; D. Dimant, “The Apocalyptic Interpretation of Ezekiel at Qumran,” in *Messiah and Christos: Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity Presented to David Flusser on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (TSAJ 32; ed. I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked, and G.G. Stroumsa; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 31–52; G.T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet: The Use of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John and in Literature of the Second Temple Period* (JSNTSup 270; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 22–77.

gods of Egypt; he will burn them down and carry them off” (Jer 43:12–13).(40)

Finally, the “vengeance” is also linked to the drowning of the Egyptians. This event is explicitly presented as a punishment carried out “measure for measure”: “All of the people whom he brought out to pursue the Israelites the Lord our God threw into the sea—to the depths of the abyss—in place of the Israelites, just as the Egyptians had thrown their sons into the river. *He took revenge* on 1,000,000 of them, 1000 men (who were) strong and also very brave perished for one infant of your people whom they had thrown into the river” (*Jub.* 48:14; italics added).(41)

The Jubilean *Leitmotif* suggests that the author understood the events of the Exodus as divine retribution for Egypt’s heartlessness towards the Israelites. While the introduction of the motif of revenge into the biblical Exodus account is based upon its association with the term שפטים (“judgments”) employed in the biblical account, however, it is also linked to thematic analogies. The Jubilean author appears to have perceived an affinity between the Exodus and the prophecies against the nations, the wicked acts of a nation bringing down God’s punishment upon it in both sets of texts.(42) He thus introduces the idea of revenge/retribution not merely on the basis of the term שפטים but also due to his alignment of the Egyptians’ fate with that prophesied for other nations who similarly oppressed Israel.

Conclusion

This exploration of some of the literary devices and exegetical features employed in *Jub.* 48 reveals that the Jubilean author draws out the element of judgment (שפטים), interpreting the biblical Exodus

(40) Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 212, n. 27. In Ezekiel’s prophecies the judgments on Egypt are paralleled by fire, thus allowing the Jubilean author to conclude by way of verbal analogy that the judgments (שפטים) referred to in Exod 12:12 were actually fire (cf. also Ezek 16:41). A similar conclusion may also be drawn from Jer 43:12–13 on the basis of the similar *theme* it shares with Exod 12:12— i.e., the punishment of the Egyptian gods. For the gods of Egypt as being burned by fire, see 1QM 14 1; cf. also *Tg. Ps.-J.* to Exod 12:12; *Mekh. Pischa* 7; *Mekh. de R. Shimon bar Johai* 12:12. However the latter texts probably interpret the judgments of the Egyptian gods in light of the pentateuchal law regarding the destruction of idols (cf. Deut 7:5, 12:3).

(41) A similar interpretation is attested in Wis 11:6–7, 18:5; cf. *Tg. Neof.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.* to Exod 18:11; *Mekh. de R. Shimon bar Johai* 15:4; *Mekh. Amalek* 3; *b. Sot.* 11a. It is probable that, in similar fashion to the rabbinic sources, *Jubilees*’ interpretation of the drowning of the Egyptians as a punishment carried out measure for measure derives from Jethro’s statement to Moses: “Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, yes, by the result of their very schemes against [the people]” (Exod 18:11).

account specifically in terms of revenge. Firstly, the similar meaning between the term שפטים used in the Exodus account to designate the plagues and the phrase דן אנכי found in the Covenant between the Pieces, as well as their similar context, enabled him to represent the events of the Exodus as a fulfillment of the promised judgment “upon the nation they shall serve.” This exegesis is both made explicit in *Jub.* 48:8, 18–19 and implied via the structure of the chapter, which appears to correspond to the two parts of this divine promise. Secondly, the term שפטים serves the Jubilean author as a linguistic device by means of which he enlisted its synonym—revenge, which becomes the *Leitmotif* of his reworked Exodus story. *Jub.* 48 depicts the plagues, the judgment against the gods of Egypt, and the drowning of the Egyptians as divine punishment for the Egyptians’ evil deeds. Finally, the description of Moses’ commissioning further emphasizes this theme, his mission being portrayed as “heralding” the coming judgment on the Egyptians and the execution of “judgments and revenge” upon them. The reworking presented in *Jub.* 48 thus frames the story of Exod 2:15b–15 as a narrative about “judgment and revenge” justly brought upon the Egyptians due to their wicked acts.

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