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# *Resurrection and Zechariah 14.5 in the Didache Apocalypse*

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JONATHAN A. DRAPER

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult passages among many in the *Didache* is 16.5: “Then the creation of human beings will come to the fire of testing, and many will fall away and be lost, but those who endure in their faith will be saved by the curse itself/himself.” The usual way of explaining this “curse” (κατάθεμα) is to see it as referring to Jesus on the cross, so that it reads “will be saved by him who was accursed” in line with the Pauline understanding in Galatians 3.13 and I Corinthians 12.3.<sup>1</sup> An alternative, and rather unconvincing, interpretation was provided by J.-P. Audet, who understood here a reference to the grave.<sup>2</sup> In my doctoral thesis,<sup>3</sup> I argued that the πύρωσιν τῆς δοκιμασίας was the reference of this difficult phrase ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ καταθῆματος, so that what was a curse to the wicked was understood as salvific for the righteous. The fire would be purgative as in Malachi 3.2–4 and as in a number of Christian texts,

1. So R. A. Kraft, *Barnabas and the Didache*, AF 3 (New York: Nelson, 1965), 176. See also A. Harnack, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*, TU 2.1–2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich’s, 1884), 62–63; W. Rordorf & A. Tuilier, *La Doctrine*, SC 248 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978), 197–98; K. Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre)-Barnabasbrief-Zweiter Klemensbrief-Schrift an Diognet* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 91, 99 n. 137; K. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache*, KAV 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 264–65. Recently also H. R. Seeligens, “Erwägungen zu Hintergrund und Zweck des apokalyptischen Schlusskapitels der *Didache*,” in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica*, 21 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 184–93.

2. J.-P. Audet, *La Didachè: Instructions des apôtres*, ÉBib (Paris: Gabalda, 1958), 472–73; cf. P. Nautin, “La composition de la ‘Didache’ et son titre,” *RHR* 155 (1959): 214.

3. J. A. Draper, *A Commentary on the Didache in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Documents* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Cambridge University, 1983), 314–17.

especially Hermas, *Vision* IV.3,4 and I Peter 4.12.<sup>4</sup> The question has been re-opened recently in two articles in Clayton Jefford's collection of essays on the *Didache*.<sup>5</sup> Aaron Milavec<sup>6</sup> has made a strong case for the same understanding. He argues with admirable clarity that the "burning process of testing" has a double reference:

According to the *Didache*, this "fire" will be experienced in two distinct ways: 1) those who follow the Way of Death (as defined in 5.1–2 and 16.3–4) will be entrapped and destroyed by God's judgment; and 2) those who follow the Way of Life (as defined in 1.2–4.14) faithfully to the end will be approved and saved by God's judgment.<sup>7</sup>

Nancy Pardee,<sup>8</sup> in a helpful study in the same volume, argues against this interpretation. She explores the background to the development of the word *κατόθεμα* from the word *ἀνόθεμα* in Jewish literature. The original reference is to something "offered up" or "devoted," from the semantic field of the Hebrew word *מִן*. It comes to have the negative sense then of a curse, a negative sense confirmed by the substitution of *κατά* for *ἀνά*. Pardee acknowledges, however, that her study does not necessarily rule out my suggestion that the saving curse refers to persecution and suffering, simply maintaining that the context speaks against it.<sup>9</sup>

In this article, I wish to push this line of reasoning further and defend the reference of *ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ καταθ<sup>ο</sup>ματος* to purgatorial fire in its context, by a study of the understanding of resurrection in the *Didache*. Building on the work of George Nickelsburg, I believe that the background to the text is the theology of martyrdom which emerged from the Maccabean crisis.<sup>10</sup> Resurrection is the recompense for the suffering

4. J. A. Draper, "The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*," in D. Wenham (ed.), *Gospel Perspectives*, V (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 269–87.

5. C. N. Jefford, *The Didache in Context: Essays on its Text, History and Transmission* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

6. "The Saving Efficacy of the Burning Process in *Didache* 16.5," in *Didache in Context*, 131–55.

7. *Ibid.*, 138.

8. "The Curse that Saves (*Didache* 16.5)," in *Didache in Context*, 156–76.

9. *Ibid.*, 174.

10. The chronological and theological development of the concept of resurrection in "intertestamental" Judaism has been explored thoroughly and convincingly by George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism*, HTS 26 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972). Cf. also W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 46–47, contra H. F. von Campenhausen, *Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936), 1–5, who denies the Jewish roots of the Christian concept of martyrdom.

righteous. So there is no general resurrection but only a resurrection of the righteous, those who have emerged unscathed from the fire of testing.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the punishment of the wicked is not resurrection to eternal life of torment, but simply extinction.<sup>12</sup> It is in this general sense also that the Two Ways speak of Life and Death as the goals of the ethical life.<sup>13</sup>

John Pobee, in his study of persecution and martyrdom in Paul, has argued that the theology of martyrdom resolved the question of theodicy in four ways: firstly, it viewed suffering as punishment or chastisement for the sins of the martyr her/himself, a way of expiating her/his own sins and the sins of the nation.<sup>14</sup> Thus, in b.Berakot 5a we read, “chastisements wipe out all a man’s wickedness” or in II Maccabees 7.18, “For we are suffering these things on our own account, because of our sins against our own God. Therefore astounding things have happened.”<sup>15</sup> Again in II Maccabees 7.38:

I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our fathers, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by afflictions and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God, and through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty which has justly fallen on our whole nation.

Secondly, it was seen as sacrifice atoning for sins, in the way of purification: “. . . it was a vicarious suffering which had atoning efficacy. Martyrdom acquires a treasury of merits, so to speak, which is available for the covering of the sins of others. It is a vicarious atoning offering.”<sup>16</sup> Thirdly, the theodical problem of the nature of God’s justice in the face of the persecution of the righteous, was often resolved eschatologically,

11. Cf. also Seeliger, “Erwägungen zu Hintergrund und Zweck,” 185–92, esp. 189.

12. As in the *Pss. Sol.* 13.11; 15.10 and the Qumran Scrolls.

13. Cf. *Pss. Sol.* 14.9–10: “For the ways of men are known before him always, and he knows the secrets of the heart before they happen. Therefore their inheritance is Hades, and darkness and destruction; and they will not be found on the day of mercy for the righteous. But the devout of the Lord will inherit life in happiness.” Translation from J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), 664.

14. John S. Pobee, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul*, JSNTS 6 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 34.

15. The translation of I and II Maccabees used in this article is taken from the Revised Standard Version. Cf. also the analysis of I Macc 7 in Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 93–111. He notes the influence of the Isaianic tradition of the suffering servant (cf. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 33) and the confluence of wisdom motifs in Wisdom 2 and 5.

16. Pobee, *Suffering and Martyrdom*, 38.

when the Day of the Lord would set all to right. He would reward the martyrs for their suffering.<sup>17</sup> Fourthly, Pobeë argues that the problem was resolved in terms of the Cosmic Battle between God and his angels and Satan and his angels.<sup>18</sup>

Of particular interest for our purposes, the martyrs were envisaged being rewarded with immortality (ἀθανασία, ἀφθαρσία) or, more particularly, resurrection:

And when he was at his last breath, he said, “You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.” (II Macc 7.9; cf. 7.29)

This idea seems to have been widespread.<sup>19</sup> Their sufferings now not only purify them from their sins, but are also rewarded with resurrection: “They who die for the Lord’s sake will awake” (*T.Judah* 25.4). George Nickelsburg comments on this passage:

Resurrection is not simply another event in the restoration of Israel. Only certain persons are raised. The choice of some and not others in itself implies a kind of judgment. Moreover, their resurrection is mentioned vis-à-vis a specific circumstance, viz., that they died on account of the Lord. Resurrection is a means of vindicating that pious behavior which was responsible for their death.<sup>20</sup>

This is a good summary of what we are arguing was the background to *Didache* 16.7 also. It is significant that the *Testament of Judah* shares the background of the Two Ways typology with the *Didache*, so that this may be an important link between their resurrection thinking also. In other words, there was a connection between the concept of purgative suffering and that of resurrection.

The wider context of the “curse” passage is as follows:

Τότε ἕξει ἡ κτίσις τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰς  
τὴν πύρωσιν τῆς δοκιμασίας καὶ  
σκανδαλισθήσονται πολλοὶ καὶ  
ἀπολοῦνται, οἱ δὲ ὑπομείναντες ἐν τῇ  
πίστει αὐτῶν σωθήσονται ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ  
καταθῆματος, καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὰ

Then the created order of human  
beings shall come to the fire of testing  
and many shall stumble and they shall  
be lost, but those who endure in their  
faith shall be saved by the curse itself.  
And then the true signs shall appear:

17. Ibid., 38–45.

18. Ibid., 45–46.

19. Pobeë cites IV Macc 16.13; 14.5; 15.3; 17.12; 18.3; Wisd 3.1–6; Pss. Sol. 3.11; 13.11; 14.2–3; Josephus, *Bell.* 2.152–153; 515; 7.344, 346.

20. *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 35.

σημεῖα τῶς ἀληθείας· πρῶτον σημεῖον ἐκτετάσεως ἐν οὐρανῷ εἶτα σημεῖον φωνῶς σάλπιγγος, καὶ τρίτον ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν· οὐ πάντων δ' ἄλλ' ὡς ἐρρῶθη· “Ἡξεί ὁ κύριος καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ.” Τότε ὄψεται ὁ κόσμος τὸν κύριον ἐρχόμενον ἐπάνω τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

first the sign spread out in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet, and third the resurrection of the dead—but not of all, but as it was said: “The Lord shall come and all his holy ones with him.” Then the world shall see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

There is disagreement about whether chapter 16 reflects the immediacy of eschatological expectation.<sup>21</sup> The advent of the Antichrist is accompanied by false signs and wonders which lead many astray. The faithful, already disturbed by persecution and betrayal, will now be put to the most terrible time of testing. Many will stumble and be lost, but those who endure will discover that the fiery testing is their salvation, as they emerge purged from their sin. At this point the three true signs, contrasted with the false signs of the Antichrist, are given: the sign or totem of the messiah is spread out in the heaven to inaugurate the gathering of the righteous, the trumpet is blown and finally the dead arise.<sup>22</sup> A key factor for our purposes, however, is that the resurrection of the righteous to “come with the Lord” is the climactic moment of the apocalypse. It is the vindication of the righteous suffering and martyrdom to which the *Didache* calls its community.

## 2. THE CITATION OF ZECHARIAH 14.5 IN THE *DIDACHE*

What is interesting in this text is that the resurrection is specifically limited to the righteous, and that a Scriptural citation, very rare in the *Didache*, is given to justify this. Niederwimmer has argued that this citation should be attributed to the final redactor of the *Didache*, but its sense seems to fit the context very well and it also reflects very ancient

21. As argued, for instance, by O. Giordano, “L’escatologia nella *Didaché*,” in *Oikoumene: Studi paleocristiani in onore del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano, II* (Catania: Università di Catania, 1964), 121–39, esp. 128, “Al tempo della *Didaché* le comunità cristiane erano percorse da un solo fremito e accese da una sola luminosa speranza: il Signore viene.” R. A. Kraft (*Barnabas and the Didache*, 13) on the other hand sees here rather “apocalyptic commonplaces current in early Christianity.”

22. I have argued elsewhere that this pattern of signs was a widespread one in Jewish thinking in the first century C.E., arising out of Holy War terminology. See J. A. Draper, “The Development of the ‘Sign of the Son of Man’ in the Jesus Tradition,” *NTS* 39 (1993): 1–21.

tradition.<sup>23</sup> Zechariah 14.5 is cited in a form close to, but not identical with, the Septuagint, indicating that the *Didache* may not be dependent on the Septuagint but may have independent access to the Hebrew text or to a different translation, as suggested also by 1.6 and 14.3.<sup>24</sup>

The Masoretic Text runs as follows: וְבָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי כָל־קְדוֹשֵׁי עַמֶּךָ. There are a number of variants. Some manuscripts have אֱלֹהֵי for אֱלֹהֵיךָ. The Septuagint, Syriac, some manuscripts of the Targumim, and the Vulgate read וְכָל for כָּל. Many manuscripts and all versions read עַמֶּךָ for עַמֶּךָ. The text of the *Didache* compares with the Septuagint as follows:

Septuagint	<i>Didache</i>
καὶ ἦξει κύριος ὁ θεός μου	ἦξει ὁ κύριος
καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ.	καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ

Note here the absence of ὁ θεός μου, which resolves the Christological problem of a direct equation between the returning Lord and Yahweh. This is resolved differently by the tradition found in Paul, Mark and Matthew, as we shall see. Another notable variant is that the Targum reads וְיִתְגַּלֵּי for וְבָא: “Then the Lord my God shall be revealed, [and] all his holy ones with him.”

The use of Zechariah 14.5 as a proof text for the limited resurrection of the righteous in the *Didache*, without further explanation, is interesting. It is not an obvious choice of proof text, however, and this raises the question as to whether such an interpretation was *sui generis* or whether it was commonly understood. The fact that it is adduced as a proof text suggests that the interpretation would have been understood by the readers of the *Didache*, so that it would have a self-evident quality. Hence it is critical to explore the use of this Old Testament text elsewhere in the tradition. There are indications that Zechariah 14 was a crucial point for Jewish and Christian reflection on the longed-for intervention of God in the last days.<sup>25</sup> This paper will explore remnants of such an interpretation in the New Testament, Patristic and Rabbinic exegesis to see whether the citation in the *Didache* represents a deep rooted pattern of exegesis or an eccentric aberration. I will begin with the small remnant

23. K. Niederwimmer, “Der Didachist und seine Quellen,” in C. Jefford, *Didache in Context*, 15–36, esp. 36.

24. Cf. D. de Bruyne, “Étude sur le texte latin de l’Écclesiastique,” *RB* 40 (1928): 5–48; R. P. Gordon, “Targumic Parallels to Acts XIII 18 and *Didache* XIV 3,” *NovT* 16 (1974): 285–89.

25. Cf. J. A. Draper, “The Heavenly Feast of Tabernacles: Revelation 7.1–17,” *JSNT* 19 (1983): 133–47.

of Rabbinic material, even though this is later chronologically, because it is probably independent of the Christian tradition, and may offer a more reliable indicator of the existence of a tradition of interpretation of the Zechariah passage. However, it is important to note that the Rabbinic writings represent the literate or “great tradition,” whereas the early Christian movement represents the “little tradition.”<sup>26</sup> A popular interpretation of the “little tradition” may appear in Rabbinic writings only tangentially, so that these echoes may be disproportionately significant.

### 3. RABBINIC EXEGESIS OF ZECHARIAH 14.5

#### 3.1 *b.Pesahim* 50a

I have only been able to locate two relevant indications of a Rabbinic exegesis of this passage, both of them relatively late. However, they are interesting all the same. The first does not refer to Zechariah 14.5 itself, but begins with an exegesis of 14.6. It comes from *b.Pesahim* 50a, in the context of a debate over the permissible quantities of *ḥametz* and hallowed meat which a man may ignore or deal with by immediate burning, rather than returning to the Temple, if he should accidentally leave Jerusalem with them. The Mishnaic debate is between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah, the students of Rabbi Aqiba. In the Babylonian tractate, a contrary opinion of R. Nathan is recorded and rejected. This introduces a sustained commentary on passages from Zechariah 14, beginning:

*And it shall come to pass in that day that there shall not be light, but heavy clouds [yekāroth] and thick [we-kippa'on]; what does yekāroth wekippa'on mean?—Said R. Eleazar: This means, the light which is precious [yakar] in this world, is yet of little account [kapuy] in the next world. R. Johanan said: This refers to Nega'im and Ohaloth, which are difficult [heavy] in this world yet shall be light [easily understood] in the future world. While R. Joshua b. Levi said: This refers to the people who are honoured in this world, but will be lightly esteemed in the next world. As was the case of R. Joseph the son of R. Joshua b. Levi, [who] became ill and fell into a trance. When he recovered, his father asked him, “What did you see?” “I saw a topsy-turvy world,” he replied, “the upper [class] underneath and the lower on top,” he replied: “My son,” he observed, “you saw a clear world. And how are we [situated] there?” “Just as we are here, so are we there.”*

26. Here I am using the terminology derived by James Scott (e.g., “Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition,” *Theory and Society* 4 [1977]: 1–38; 211–46) from Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Cultural Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).



And I heard them saying, "Happy is he who comes hither with his learning in his hand." And I also heard them saying, "Those martyred by the State, no man can stand within their barrier." Who are these [martyrs]? Shall we say, R. Akiba and his companions? Is that because they were martyrs of the State and nothing else? Rather [he meant] the martyrs of Lydda.<sup>27</sup>

There follows a further series of comments on Zechariah 14.20–21 and 14.9. It seems that the debate on *ḥāmetz* and sacrificial meat has introduced what was probably an existing exegetical tradition on Zechariah 14, because of the saying of R. Johanan on an equally difficult legal problem of contagion by leprosy and the defilement of tents by a corpse, that "things which are difficult in this world will be settled in the next."

For our purposes, what is interesting is that the difficult passage from Zechariah concerning the absence of light and cold (as the Septuagint interprets it), is referred immediately to the future world. This then leads, in turn, to a discussion about the resurrection into the future world. It is, again, of interest that resurrection is closely connected with martyrdom for the faith, the martyrdom of R. Aqiba and of the martyrs of Lydda being mentioned as examples. But the Rabbis are naturally not content to leave resurrection as a reward for martyrdom, but add the understanding that those who study Torah will be in a favourable position, "Happy is he who comes hither with his learning in his hand."

Since this interpretation of Zechariah 14.6 is connected to interpretations of other passages from Zechariah, it seems fair to conclude that Zechariah 14.5 would have been understood in the context of resurrection also, although obviously this cannot be more than suggestion.

### 3.2 *Midrashim*

An interpretation of Zechariah 14.5 related to that found in the *Didache* is found in three places in the *Midrash Rabbah*. According to this interpretation, the "holy ones" in the text refers to the resurrected prophets, whose unpublished prophecies will now be published. This may relate to the idea of the cessation of prophecy reflected in the same Rabbinic texts. So in the midrash on *Ruth*, a commentary on II Kings 2.3 runs as follows:

The verse says "prophets," which signifies a minimum number of two. For what reasons were their prophecies not made public: Because they had no permanent value for future generations. Deduce from this that a prophecy of which there is no need for [future] generations is not published. But in

27. Translation by H. Freedman, *Pesahim* (London: Soncino, 1983).

the time to come the Holy One, blessed be He, will come and bring them with Him and their prophecies will be published. That is the meaning of, *And the Lord my God shall come, and all the holy ones with Thee* (Zech. xiv,5).<sup>28</sup>

H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger date *Ruth Rabba* to around 500 C.E. since “The text mentions no rabbis after the fourth century, and originates from Palestine (*inter alia* because of its language); because of its literary dependencies it must be dated around the year 500.”<sup>29</sup> The same midrash is repeated in *Canticles Rabba* 4.11.1 in virtually identical wording.

A similar midrash occurs in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 1.11.1, in a commentary on the text “To what, then, shall I give remembrance?”:

To what, then, shall I give remembrance? To the miracles of the world to come. . . . Many prophets arose in Israel whose names have not been specified; but in the Hereafter the Holy One, blessed be He, will come and bring them with Him. That is what is written, *And the Lord thy God shall come, and all the holy ones with Thee* (Zech. xiv,5).<sup>30</sup>

This work is later than the previous ones. Strack-Stemberger ascribe it to Palestine and date it to around the eighth century.

The association of the text of Zechariah 14.5 with the resurrected prophets is significant, since there came to be an identification of prophets and martyrs in the later apocalyptic tradition. The development of this has been traced by H. A. Fischel in his study of martyrdom published, significantly, in 1946, in the shadow of the Holocaust.<sup>31</sup> Initially, prophets are seen as the “prototype martyrs,” later “martyrdom became a *sine qua non* of the prophetic vocation and, therefore, every prophet was regarded as having undergone a martyr’s death.”<sup>32</sup> Numerous examples of the martyrdoms of the biblical prophets can be found, e.g., the *Ascension of Isaiah* 2.16; *Vitae Prophetarum* 71.3f; 119.12f; *Martyrdom of Isaiah*; b.Yebamot 49b; b.Sanhedrin 103b; j.Sanhedrin

28. *Midrash Rabbah: Ruth*, trs. L. Rabinowitz (London/New York: Soncino, 1983<sup>3</sup>), 5.

29. H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 344.

30. *Midrash Rabbah: Ecclesiastes*, trs. L. Rabinowitz (London/New York: Soncino, 1983<sup>3</sup>), 5.

31. H. A. Fischel, “Martyr and Prophet,” *JQR* 37 (1946): 265–80; 363–86. He argues that “the belief in the vicarious suffering of the martyred prophets and prophetic martyrs is quite prominent in the Jewish martyr literature from beginning to end.

32. Pobee, *Persecution and Martyrdom*, 28.

28c; Targum of Isaiah 66.1; Hebrews 11.37.<sup>33</sup> In a final development, as Pobeë describes it, every martyr was considered to have been a prophet:

The starting point of this idea is the belief that every *moriturus* had a vision. . . . However, the theology goes beyond the vision of a *moriturus* to invest the vision with the same force as the words of prophecy. Thus a dying martyr's testimony is "esteemed like precious oracles or even the words of classical prophecy."<sup>34</sup>

So it seems that the interpretation of the text of Zechariah in the Midrashim depends on the association of prophets and martyrs, so that the text is understood as a proof-text for the resurrection of the martyrs. This matches what was suggested in the commentary of b.Pesah̄an 50a.

#### 4. EXEGESIS OF ZECHARIAH 14.5 IN CHRISTIAN TEXTS

The influence of Zechariah 14.5 in the Christian tradition is clear but often far from straightforward. We will begin with an examination of Paul's use of the text in I and II Thessalonians, since this is the earliest evidence we possess. Then we shall examine the Synoptic tradition. Finally, we shall examine the influence of the text in Patristic texts other than the *Didache*.

##### *I & II Thessalonians*

In I Thessalonians 3.13, in the context of the coming persecution (θλίψεσιν/θλίβεσθαι), Paul promises that God himself will prepare the way before them and strengthen them to be pure and holy "when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones" (ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ). J. van Eijk argues that this text contains only a "feeble allusion" to Zechariah 14.5 (*La résurrection des morts chez les Pères apostoliques*, 26; see also n. 67). Van Eijk questions whether there is any reference to the resurrection of the dead here at all. Likewise, Ernest Best argues that the reference is not to the saints at all but to the angels, even though ἄγιοι uniformly means "the saints" in Paul's writings: "Paul cannot but have known and been accustomed to the meaning 'angels' and therefore could easily have made an exception here."<sup>35</sup> Best argues that this passage is an exception

33. Ibid., 123 n. 39.

34. Ibid., 28, citing Fischel, "Martyr and Prophet," 366.

35. E. Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Black, 1972), 153. Cf. J. E. Frame, *Thessalonians: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, ICC

because it refers to the parousia: “Elsewhere he invariably, and frequently, uses the word of Christians but never in the context of the parousia, except for II Thessalonians 1.10 and there they are not regarded as accompanying Jesus; in our epistle Christians, the dead and living saints, meet Jesus at the parousia (4.16–7; 5.10) and are with him thereafter.”<sup>36</sup> The truth is that Paul only once speaks of the parousia outside of the Thessalonian correspondence, and there it is to argue that after the resurrection of Christ, those who belong to him will rise from the dead also, presumably to accompany him (I Cor 15.23), so Best’s argument is not very convincing. He himself is aware of this, and concedes that “the argument is evenly balanced and ‘saints’ is a real alternative.”<sup>37</sup>

In response to this argument, I would question whether “angels and saints” can really be so neatly contrasted. Fischel remarks that “the resemblance of both prophet and martyr to angels as far as beauty and radiance are concerned, their glorious reception in the other world and their proximity to the Throne, were carried as far toward an apotheosis as Rabbinic religion could permit.”<sup>38</sup> In the debate between Jesus and the Sadducees, Mark reports Jesus as affirming that in the resurrection they shall be *ὡς ἄγγελοι* (Mk 12.25). This indicates a blurring of the distinction between saints and angels.

I Thessalonians 3.13 is not, however, the only allusion to Zechariah 14.5 in Paul. A key passage for supporting our interpretation of the *Didache*, is II Thessalonians 1.3-10, which we need to cite at some length:

We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, as is fitting, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you

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(Edinburgh: Clark, 1912), 139; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 102–3, and C. A. Wanamaker, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 145. C. Masson, *Les Deux Épîtres de Saint Paul aux Thessaloniens*, CduNT 11a (Neuchâtel/Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957), 43–44, agrees, seeing here an eschatological transformation of the Testament of Moses in Dt 33.2, which describes the coming of Yahweh to accompany his people in the desert *ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ* (LXX).

36. *Ibid.*, 152.

37. *Ibid.*, 153. This is the view held by G. G. Findlay, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1904), 77 (human followers of Christ). B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (Paris: Gabalda, 1956), 492, and I. H. Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Camden, NJ: Nelson, 1969), 115, argue that both angels and saints are intended.

38. “Martyr and Prophet,” 382.

for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast of you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which you are enduring.

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering—since indeed God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all who have believed (ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ καὶ θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν), because our testimony to you was believed. (RSV)

In this passage, there is a double reference to the coming of the “holy ones.” In 1.7 the “revealing of the Lord Jesus from heaven” is “with his mighty angels,” possibly reflecting the variant reading לְגַלְיָא (“revealed”) of the Targum to Zechariah 14.5 discussed above. This is juxtaposed with a coming of the resurrected saints in 1.10. Many commentators have seen the background of verse 10 in Psalm 88.6, where God ἐνδοξαζόμενος ἐν βουλή ἁγίων.<sup>39</sup> However, it is more likely that the background of the phrase in verse 10 (ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ) lies in Zechariah 14.5. Certainly the word πάντες is missing, but the reference to the glory of the coming Lord is similar to what we shall find in citations of Zechariah 14.5 in the Synoptic tradition.

I would suggest that the background to ἐνδοχασθῆναι here, and ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ in the Synoptics, represents a survival of an Aramaic or targumic interpretation in which the Hebrew אָבָרָה or אָבָרָהּ is interpreted from its root meaning, “power” or “majesty.”<sup>40</sup> Hence, “The Lord, my/ thy power/majesty/glory, will come. . . .” This kind of interpretation, based on variants and roots, was common in the first century C.E., and

39. See Wanamaker, *Commentary*, 230, “The first clause was almost certainly constructed from the LXX version of Ps. 88:6 (89:7).” So too Best, *Commentary*, 264. It is not impossible that this text has influenced the formulation of the tradition, which is cited somewhat loosely: the question is rather that of the primary reference of the Old Testament tradition.

40. HALT, 47 (II.3f); M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targum, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Traditional Press, 1950), 67, though M. Sokoloff (*A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* [Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990], 59) has only “God” or “gods.”

can be seen in the Qumran Peshirim.<sup>41</sup> The intention is to suggest compete identification with God, without identity. There is evidence of a tradition of the Name-bearing angel in mystic speculation in Jewish thinking in this period (whatever date we assign to “*mercabah*-mysticism,” its roots are in this period already). Works such as the Prayer of Joseph,<sup>42</sup> the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *III Enoch* 10.3 (cf. 13.1; 22.5; 39.1 etc.) envisage an angel bearing the Divine Name, mediating the power and presence of God. Such an understanding underlies the famous *Carmen Christi* in Philippians 2.6–11. The righteous suffering and death of the martyr Christ is rewarded by God with resurrection and exaltation. He is given the Name of God and receives the worship and homage of human and spiritual beings εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.<sup>43</sup> John’s Gospel seems to have the same understanding of Jesus’ mediation of the Name of God (17.6, 11, 26). In the eucharistic prayers of *Didache* 10.1, 3 thanks are given for the indwelling of the Name, so that these ideas may well be present here too.<sup>44</sup> The recurrence of the qualifying “in glory” in citations of Zechariah 14.5 in Matthew, Mark and Paul, suggests that it was a fixed part of the tradition.

Returning to II Thessalonians, I would then translate ἐν not as “among” or even instrumentally “by,” but “with” or “accompanied by.”<sup>45</sup> One could translate it as follows: “When he comes to be glorified with his holy ones.” In other words, the “saints” mentioned here are not the same as “all who believe” in “and to be wondered at with [or among] all who believe,” although they stand parallel to them. The Lord comes in glory with the righteous departed, and to be marveled at by the righteous living who have believed and now see the Lord. This does not exclude or conflict with the idea of accompanying angels, which are an indispensable feature of the eschaton. They form, after all, the armies which will punish and destroy the wicked.

Again, it is the theme of the suffering of the righteous and the martyrs which calls up the reference to the coming of the saints with the Lord. The passage serves as the climax of the encouragement which Paul gives

41. See, e.g., J. A. Draper, “A Targum of Isaiah in 1QS III,2–3,” *RevQ* 42 (1983): 265–69; “The Apostles as Foundation Stones of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the Foundation of the Qumran Community,” *Neot* 22 (1988): 41–63.

42. Origen, *Commentary on John* II.31.25.

43. Cf. R. P. Martin, *Commentary on Philippians*, 10–11.

44. Cf. J. A. Draper, *Commentary*.

45. BAGD, 258 4.c. This interpretation is not considered by Best, *Commentary*, 264, and it is certainly not the most straightforward grammatically, because of the intervening ἐνδοξασθῆναι.

to the persecuted church. Their heavy suffering is evidence of God's righteousness, since it is making them worthy<sup>46</sup> of the kingdom: "since it is just with God to repay affliction to those who afflict you and remission [of sins] to you who are afflicted with us." The word ἄνεσις is uncommon, but its primary reference is to loosening or relaxing, which may then be applied to remission or rebatement (of taxes, etc.).<sup>47</sup> The translation of this word by "peace" is not impossible, but not obvious.<sup>48</sup> Suffering has a purgative value. This is followed by a reference to the revealing of Jesus from heaven with his angels to afflict the wicked with fire. Significantly, the wicked are simply destroyed. There is no suggestion here of a resurrection of the wicked. Then the Lord comes with his holy ones, the resurrected righteous only.

This interpretation of II Thessalonians 1.3–10 is far from conclusive, but it seems to fit the kind of pattern we observed in references to the text of Zechariah 14.5 in Rabbinic texts.

### *The Synoptic Tradition*

Matthew's gospel twice refers to the coming of the Son of Man in a way that seems to reflect Zechariah 14.5.<sup>49</sup> However, as is well known, he understands the "holy ones" who were to come with the Lord as a reference to the angels. In Matthew 25.31, the reference introduces the story of the Son of Man separating the sheep and the goats:

Ἵταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ.

The "Son of Man" has replaced the κύριος, "In his glory" has replaced "your God," and "saints" has been specified as "angels." It should be noted, however, that there is a variant reading which inserts ἄγιοι before ἄγγελοι (A W f<sup>13</sup> M f sy<sup>p,h</sup> bo<sup>pt</sup>). It could be that this reflects a compromise text from an earlier variant which had only ἄγιοι, although this seems unlikely. R. H. Gundry, in his study of the use of the Old Testament in Matthew, acknowledges the background of Zechariah 14.5 here but has argued, wrongly in my opinion, that the reference to angels

46. It is the persecution itself which is "making them worthy" (καταξιωθῆναι), *contra* Best (*Commentary*, 255) who translates "will be thought worthy." This line of interpretation is supported by Wanamaker, *Commentary*, 221ff.

47. LSJ, 135b.

48. Best, *Commentary*, 257.

49. So J. A. T. Robinson, "The 'Parable' of the Sheep and the Goats," in *Twelve New Testament Studies*, SBTh 34 (London: SCM, 1962), 67–93, esp. 81.

is the older usage.<sup>50</sup> We have already observed that the saints are ὡς ἄγγελοι. In any case, there is no suggestion in the text of Matthew that the coming of the Son of Man to judge the world inaugurates a resurrection of the unjust. The picture is of the judgment and separation of the living into those who will have eternal life and those who will have eternal punishment (εἰς κόλασιν αἰ=νιον). This is characteristic of Matthew's understanding, as can be seen from his addition of καὶ τότε ἀποδ=σει ἐκάστω κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ to Mark's framework in 16.27. Robinson, indeed, argues that the whole is a Matthean construction.<sup>51</sup>

This passage has been a notorious crux of exegesis since the third century,<sup>52</sup> and I have no intention of getting drawn into the debate. However, the particularist interpretation, whereby the "least" to whom the good or evil deeds are done which form the basis of judgment, refers to the Christian community<sup>53</sup> seems supported by our study of Zechariah 14.5. The persecutions and martyrdom suffered by the Christian community calls to mind the proof text Zechariah 14.5, which promises that the martyrs will come with the Lord. Lambrecht suggests that the composition of this reference is "ad hoc": "This sequence of agreements [with other Matthean passages] might suggest that the pericope has been constructed 'ad hoc,' although that does not necessarily mean that Matthew created it 'ex nihilo.'"<sup>54</sup> It is quite possible that Matthew understands the angels who accompany the Son of Man as a reference to the resurrected martyrs. Matthew follows Mark in arguing that in the resurrection, the righteous will be ὡς ἄγγελοι (Mt 22.30=Mk 12.25).

50. R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in Saint Matthew's Gospel: With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, SuppNovT 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 142. Gundry argues that, "Unlike Paul, who adopts τῶν ἁγίων from the LXX, Mt interpretatively (and correctly) renders מַשְׁרָפִּי by οἱ ἄγγελοι." However, this is anachronistic reasoning. There is no reason to suppose that the correct interpretation of what may have been Zechariah's understanding makes a text prior to another in the first century C.E.

51. Robinson, "The Sheep and the Goats," 78ff.; cf. J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1972), 206; J. S. Kloppenborg, "Didache 16 6–8 and Special Matthean Tradition," *ZNW* 70 (1979): 58.

52. See S. W. Gray, *The Least of My Brothers: Matthew 26.31–46: A History of Interpretation*, SBLDS 114 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989).

53. The argument is clearly and convincingly set out by Graham N. Stanton, "Once More: Matthew 25.31–46," in *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 207–31. Cf. J. Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse," in M. Didier, *L'Évangile selon Matthieu: Rédaction et Théologie*, BETL 29 (Gembloux: Duculot, 1972), 309–42.

54. Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse," 330.



Thus Matthew is not as far from the *Didache* as might at first appear. Nevertheless, there is no dependence here on the gospel. The close relationship has sometimes been explained in this way, but this cannot be proved. Indeed, there may be some evidence that Matthew was dependent either on the *Didache* or its source.<sup>55</sup> However, Matthew does use or reflect texts from Zechariah frequently: twice explicitly (Zech 9.9 in Mt 21.5 and Zech 11.12–3 in Mt 27.9) and seven times without reference.<sup>56</sup>

A second probable reference to Zechariah 14.5 can be seen in the context of the Confession at Caesarea Philippi. Jesus calls his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, lose their life in order to regain it (Mk 8.34–9.1; Mt 16.24–28; Lk 9.23–27). The pericope follows the acknowledgment by his disciples that Jesus is the awaited messiah, and calls for a willingness to suffer martyrdom, on the basis that the martyrs will be raised from the dead, when the Son of Man comes:

Matthew 16.25–27	Mark 8.35–38	Luke 9.23–27
Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ,	Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,	
<b>Εἴ τις θ<sup>ο</sup>λει ὀπίσω μου ἔλθειν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἄράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι. ὃς γὰρ ἔαν θ<sup>ο</sup>λη τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σώσει ἀπολ<sup>ο</sup>σει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολ<sup>ο</sup>ση τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔνεκεν ἔμοῦ εὐρήσει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ ὠφελήσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον</b>	<b>Εἴ τις θ<sup>ο</sup>λει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἄράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι. ὃς γὰρ ἔαν θ<sup>ο</sup>λη τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σώσει ἀπολ<sup>ο</sup>σει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολ<sup>ο</sup>σει τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔνεκεν ἔμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου σ<sup>ε</sup>σει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ</b>	<b>Εἴ τις θ<sup>ο</sup>λει ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεσθαι, ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἄράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἑμ<sup>ο</sup>ραν καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι. ὃς γὰρ ἂν θ<sup>ο</sup>λη τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σώσει ἀπολ<sup>ο</sup>σει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολ<sup>ο</sup>ση τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔνεκεν ἔμοῦ ο τος σ<sup>ε</sup>σει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ ὠφελείται</b>

55. See J. A. Draper, “Development of the ‘Sign of the Son of Man,’” 1–21; “Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*,” 269–87. Cf. J. S. Kloppenborg, “*Didache* 16 6–8,” 54–67; W. Rordorf, “Does the *Didache* Contain Jesus Tradition Independently of the Synoptic Gospels?” in H. Wansbrough, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, JSNTSup 64 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 394–423. For a contrary view, see E. Massaux, *The Influence of the Gospel of Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus*, NGSt 5,3 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993), 144–82. C. Tuckett, “Synoptic Tradition in the *Didache*,” in J.-M. Sevrin, *The New Testament in Early Christianity / La réception des écrits néo-testamentaires dans le christianisme primitif*, BETL 86 (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1989), 197–320.

56. See W. Rothfuchs, *Die Erfüllungszitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, BzWANT 8 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969), 95–96.

ὄλον κερδήση τὴν δὲ  
 ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῆ; μ  
 τί δ=σει ἄνθρωπος  
 ἀντάλλαγμα τ=ς ψυχ=ς  
 αὐτοῦ;

μελλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς  
 τοῦ ἀνθρ=που  
 ἔρχεσθαι ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ  
 πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν  
 ἀγγ=λων αὐτοῦ, καὶ τότε  
 ἀποδ=σει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ  
 τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ.

ὠφελει ἄνθρωπος  
 κερδ=σαι τὸν κόσμον  
 ὄλον καὶ ζημιωθ=σθαι τὴν  
 ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τί γὰρ δοῖ  
 ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα  
 τ=ς ψυχ=ς αὐτοῦ;

ὅς γὰρ ἐὰν ἐπαισχυνθῆ με  
 καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους ἐν  
 τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ  
 μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἀμαρτωλῶ,  
 καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρ=που  
 ἐπαισχυνθήσεται αὐτόν,  
 ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ  
 πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν  
 ἀγγ=λων τῶν ἁγίων.

ἄνθρωπος κερδήσας τὸν  
 κόσμον ὄλον ἑαυτὸν δὲ  
 ἀπολο=σας μ ζημιωθ=εις;

ὅς γὰρ ἂν ἐπαισχυνθῆ με  
 καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους  
 τούτων

ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρ=που  
 ἐπαισχυνθήσεται, ὅταν  
 ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ  
 καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τῶν  
 ἁγίων ἀγγ=λων.

It can be seen that there is a close connection here between the losing and “finding” of life and the fact that the Son of Man is about to come with his angels in glory. Mark has a pericope about being ashamed of the Son of Man between the reference to losing one’s life and the coming of the Son of Man. In any case, it appears that the theology of the righteous martyrs lies behind these sayings concerning losing one’s life and gaining it again. And this understanding is closely connected with the idea of the coming of the Lord, in this case, though, identified as the “Son of Man,” with his angels, which seems again to be derived from Zechariah 14.5. Just as the *Didache* omits the reference in the Biblical text to ὁ θεός μου, so the Synoptic tradition replaces θεός with ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρ=που.

The presence in Mark of the detail ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ is significant, in the light of the recurrence of the reference to glory in passages which reflect Zechariah 14.5. We have already suggested that it forms part of an ancient interpretive tradition of ἡβκ. Matthew heightens the eschatological reference so that “it becomes the main sentence, and, with embellishments, completely supersedes the original logion.”<sup>57</sup> Matthew also adds a detail which may have stood originally at the conclusion of the *Didache* apocalypse, καὶ τότε ἀποδ=σει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ. This is found in both the *Apostolic Constitutions* VII, which is dependent on *Didache*, and in the lost Georgian version.<sup>58</sup>

57. Robinson, “Sheep and Goats,” 79.

58. G. Peradse, “Die ‘Lehre der zwölf Apostel’ in der georgischen Überlieferung,” ZNW 31 (1932): 111–16, though the existence/genuineness of this version must be queried since no copies are known to be extant.

What is striking in this passage in the Synoptic tradition is the combination of features from tradition related to Zechariah 14.5. In particular, it is the discussion of persecution, righteous suffering and martyrdom, which precedes the reference to the Lord coming with his angels. Secondly, there is the promise that some will not taste death before they see it happening. Thirdly, there is the appearance of Jesus on the mountain together with the two archetypal prophets, Moses and Elijah. Fischel gives evidence that Moses and Elijah were both considered to have been martyrs as well as prophets in the Rabbinic tradition.<sup>59</sup> The story concludes with an instruction of Jesus to his disciples, “not to tell anyone until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.” If, as is often argued, the Transfiguration is a retrojection of the resurrection into the earthly ministry of Jesus, then this sequence of martyrdom and coming of the Lord with the prophets on the mountain, is highly suggestive of the pattern in Zechariah. Since it is found in all three Synoptic gospels without significant deviation, it suggests that it is ancient, widely-accepted and pre-Markan tradition. It is not so much a direct use of Zechariah. On the contrary, what we are viewing here is a traditional complex of ideas concerning martyrdom and resurrection, for which Zechariah 14.5 became a proof text. And, indeed, Mark 8.38 is best seen as a veiled citation of Zechariah.

To complete this brief survey of the influence of Zechariah 14.5 on the Synoptic tradition, it is interesting to note that Matthew seems to make a connection between Zechariah 14.4 and the resurrection in 27.51–53. This at least seems to be the background to his addition to the reference in Mk 15.38 to the rending of Temple curtain when Jesus dies. Matthew adds the following passage:

Καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ καταπ<sup>ο</sup>τασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη ἀπ’ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω εἰς δύο καὶ  
 ≤ γ<sup>ο</sup> ἐσεῖσθη **καὶ αἱ π<sup>ο</sup>τρα ἐσχίσθησαν, καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα ἀνεώχθησαν** καὶ  
 πολλὰ σ<sup>ε</sup>ματα τῶν κεκοιμημ<sup>ο</sup>νων ἀγίων ±γ<sup>ο</sup> ρθησαν, καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν  
 μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ εἰσ<sup>ε</sup>λθον εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν πόλιν καὶ  
 ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς.

While there is a close verbal suggestion to this in Isaiah 48.21 (σχισθήσεται π<sup>ο</sup>τρα), this passage refers to the splitting of the rock for water to spring forth in the desert, as in the Exodus. The wording of Isaiah may have influenced and disguised Matthew’s use of Zechariah 14.4: καὶ σχισθήσεται τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν. When the Lord comes and sets foot on the Mount of Olives, the mountain splits in two. This is then applied to

59. “Martyr and Prophet,” 272–80.

the opening of the graves of the righteous departed, the resurrection of the prophets and martyrs. The connection may be tenuous, but it is suggestive. The Mount of Olives seems, in any case, to have been early identified with the hope of the resurrection, as the ancient graves located there testify.

### *Ascension of Isaiah*

The same kind of pattern as that found in Matthew is found also in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 4.14–16:

And after [one thousand] three hundred and thirty-two days the Lord will come with his angels and with the hosts of the saints from the seventh heaven with the glory of the seventh heaven, and will drag Beliar with his hosts into Gehenna, and he will bring rest to the pious who shall be found alive in the body in this world [and the sun shall grow red with shame], and to all who through faith in him have cursed Beliar and his kings. But the saints will come with the Lord in their garments which are stored on high in the seventh heaven; with the Lord they will come, whose spirits are clothed, they will descend and be present in the world, and those who are found in the body will be strengthened by the image of the saints in the garments of the saints, and the Lord will minister to those who were watchful in the world.<sup>60</sup>

This passage occurs in the “Christian interpolation” into the first (pre-Christian Jewish) section of the work, and probably originated in the second century.<sup>61</sup> Here it is only the righteous departed who are raised to come with the Lord, and the righteous living will join them. The “garments” of the saints represent their righteous deeds and suffering, probably also martyrdom (cf. Rev 7.14, where the martyrs are those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, i.e., shared in his suffering and martyrdom; cf 3.5). The wording is no longer close to that of Zechariah 14.5, but is recognizable: in this case the Lord will come with his saints; angels are mentioned beside the saints in the first reference but not the second; then there is the mention of the coming with glory [of the seventh heaven]; finally, the mention of the garments makes it explicit that only the righteous will experience the resurrection (cf. Mt 22.11–14). The evil living will simply be destroyed, “as if they had never been created” (4.18).

60. Text from E. Hennecke & W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, trs. E. Best, D. Hill, G. Ogg et al. (London: SCM, 1973<sup>2</sup>), 649.

61. Hennecke & Schneemelcher, *Ibid.*, 642ff; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 523–28.

*Ignatius Letter to the Magnesians 8–9*

There is a possible reference to Zechariah 14.5 in Ignatius' *Letter to the Magnesians* 8–9. It is tenuous, but it fits clearly in the same interpretive tradition we have been exploring. The prophets who were persecuted and martyred for their witness to God are raised from the dead when the Lord comes:

For the divine prophets lived according to Jesus Christ. Therefore they were also persecuted, being inspired by his grace, to convince the disobedient that there is one God, who manifested himself through Jesus Christ his son, who is his Word proceeding from silence, who in all respects was well-pleasing to him that sent him. . . . If these things be so, how then shall we be able to live without him of whom even the prophets were disciples in the Spirit and to whom they looked forward as their teacher? And for this reason he whom they waited for in righteousness, when he came raised them from the dead (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, ὃν δικαίως ἀνόμενον, παρὰν μείρειν αὐτοὺς ἐκ νεκρῶν).<sup>62</sup>

H. Paulsen<sup>63</sup> argues that this passage reflects the idea of the descent of Christ to the inferno to rescue, but there is no justification for this. It simply reflects the concept of the resurrection of the martyrs at the coming of the Lord. As we have seen, the prophets were seen as the archetype of the martyrs. They are the righteous ones whose suffering will be rewarded by being raised from the dead when the Lord comes.

*Hippolytus (c. 170–236 C.E.)*

Prigent argues that a similar interpretation occurs in Hippolytus' commentary on the Apocalypse.<sup>64</sup> He reconstructs Hippolytus' commentary on Revelation 20.4 from Dionysius bar Salibi (died 1171 C.E.):

For the saints will receive only one recompense, as they will all be established in only one dignity. The recompense of the virgin is much greater than that of the married. In the same way s/he who has testified [been martyred] to our Lord receives more than s/he who has not testified [been martyred]. For so it is written: "He gave a denarius to the first as to those who had come towards evening" (Mt 20.10). It signifies the life for which all live: he calls life "a denarius." Zechariah teaches that the righteous will be raised first: "The Lord will come and all the saints with

62. The translation is from K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers* I, Loeb (London: Heinemann, 1912), 205–7.

63. W. Bauer & H. Paulsen, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Polykarpbrief* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 53–54.

64. P. Prigent, "Hippolyte, commentateur de l'Apocalypse," *TZ* 28 (1972): 403.

him” (Zech 14.5). . . . And finally John has said that the martyrs will rise first on the glorious day.<sup>65</sup>

### *Origen’s Commentary on Matthew*

There is a fascinating comment on Matthew 16.24–28 in Origen’s *Commentary on Matthew*, written c. 246–248 c.E., which provides a very similar interpretation to that found in the Midrashim:

But “the Son of man shall come in the glory of His own Father”: not alone, but “with His own angels.” And if you can conceive of all those who are fellow-helpers in the glory of the Word, and in the revelation of the Wisdom which is Christ, coming along with Him, you will see in what way the Son of man comes in the glory of His angels. And consider whether you can in this connection say that the prophets who formerly suffered in virtue of their word having “no form or beauty” had an analogous position to the Word who had “no form or beauty.” And as the Son of man comes in the glory of His own Father, so the angels, who are the words in the prophets, are present with Him preserving the measure of their own glory. But when the Word comes in such form with His own angels, He will give to each a part of His own glory and of the brightness of His own angels, according to the action of each. . . . (XI.30)

While Origen accepts Matthew’s interpretation of the underlying text from Zechariah 14.5 that the “holy ones” are “angels,” he nevertheless allows that these will be the prophets, or at least the “words of the prophets.”

### *Eusebius*

Eusebius too has a remembrance of the earlier interpretation, whereby the “holy ones” are the righteous. He solves the question of the reference of the “holy ones” to angels or saints by allowing either interpretation as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 14.5. He also removes the eschatological reference and sees the prophecy fulfilled in Jesus’ earthly ministry:

This was fulfilled by the coming of our Saviour, accompanied either by His holy apostles and disciples, or by His holy ones, the divine powers and unembodied spirits, His angels and ministers, of whom the holy gospel says, “Angels came and ministered unto him.” In that day (for this is the usual name given in Holy Scripture to the time of His sojourn on earth) the prophecy before us was fulfilled as well as the other predictions, when at the times of His Passion, “From the sixth hour unto the ninth hour there

65. My translation is from the text of Prigent.

was darkness over all the earth.” Therefore the prophecy says, “In that day there shall be no light.”<sup>66</sup>

Here the coming with the “holy ones” is referred to Jesus’ incarnation, rather than his second coming, so that there is no question of resurrection here, but it is significant that the alternative interpretation of “holy ones” to refer to the righteous is preserved.

## 5. RESURRECTION AND DIDACHE 9–10

Ton H. C. van Eijk<sup>67</sup> has rightly seen that there is parallelism between *Didache* 16.7 and the eucharistic prayers of 9–10. The prayer of 9.4 for the gathering of the church from the four corners into the kingdom is matched and developed by 10.5–6:

Remember, Lord, your church, to snatch it from all evil and to make it perfect in your love, and gather it from the four winds into your kingdom, which you have prepared for it: because yours is the power and the glory for ever! Let the Lord come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the house of David! If anyone is holy, let that person come: if anyone is not, let that person repent! Maranatha! Amen.<sup>68</sup>

The first connection with ch. 16 is the prayer to God to perfect (τελειῶσαι) the church. 16.2 warns the members of the community to be gathered together frequently (πυκνῶς δὲ συναχθήσεσθε) because the whole time of their faith will be useless unless they are perfected (τελειωθήσθε). This in turn links up with the conception that only the righteous will rise from the dead.<sup>69</sup> Then the prayer appeals for the Lord to come and for this world to be destroyed.<sup>70</sup> The world will see the Lord come, according to *Didache* 16.8, and this will herald its judgment and

66. Eusebius, *d.e.* X.7 (487b–d), tr. W. J. Ferrar, *The Proof of the Gospel being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea*, vol. 2 (London: SPCK, 1920), 214.

67. *La résurrection des morts chez les Pères apostoliques*, TH 25 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974), esp. 19–28.

68. My translation.

69. Van Eijk cites τὴν ἀγιασθεῖσαν, but the phrase, which is found in the Constantinopolitan text (H54), was probably not in the original, since it is absent from both the Coptic version and the *Apostolic Constitutions* VII. So Rordorf & Tuilier, *La doctrine*, 181 n. 6.

70. Van Eijk (*Résurrection*, 23) reads “let grace come” but the reading of the Coptic version ἐγθ<sup>ο</sup>τω ὁ Κύριος should be preferred to the reading in H54 ἐγθ<sup>ο</sup>τω χάρις, since the dying of eschatological fervor is a well-documented feature of the tradition.

destruction. Finally, the eucharistic prayer concludes with a restriction of those who come (ἐρχ<sup>ο</sup>σθω) to the “holy” (εἴ τις ἅγιός ἐστιν), and the prayer for the Lord to come is repeated in Aramaic: “Let the Lord come! Amen.”

Since this reference is wedged between two appeals for the Lord to come, it is unlikely that “If anyone is holy, let that person come!” is an invitation to come up to communion, or to pass into the inner chamber for the Mass, as J.-P. Audet has argued, followed by many.<sup>71</sup> It is more likely to be an appeal and a warning to members of the community to maintain their holiness in the face of the coming judgment. Thus it is a parallel to the restriction of the resurrection to the righteous in *Didache* 16.7.<sup>72</sup> This parallel between the eschatological thinking of the eucharistic prayers and *Didache* 16 makes it unlikely that the reference to Zechariah 16.5 is a later interpolation, or indeed that the eschatological conclusion to the *Didache* is a later addition to the writing.<sup>73</sup>

## 6. RESURRECTION AND THE TWO WAYS

Nickelsburg,<sup>74</sup> in his study of resurrection in the “intertestamental period,” makes an important connection between concepts of the resurrection and the Two Ways theology of Qumran (1QS 3.13–4.26), the *Testament of Asher* and the *Doctrina / Didache*. While there is no great concern expressed in these documents about physical death, this is because of the focus on the ethical dimension of life: “Two-way documents in general say little about physical death. ‘Life’ and ‘death’ denote the ultimate destinies of men beyond physical death. The imagery of the ‘ways’ suggests continuity and, conversely, the extension of the categories of ‘life’ and ‘death’ back into one’s present existence.” All one need observe here is that the idea of a resurrection of the righteous only accords very well with a writing stamped by the ethical dualism of the Two Ways. According to Nickelsburg, this two way thinking “is not late,

71. *Didachè*, 410–24; cf. J. Betz, “Die Eucharistie in der Didache,” *ALW* 11 (1969): 10–39.

72. Van Eijk (*Résurrection*, 24) summarizes this as follows: “Nous en arrivons ainsi à la conclusion que la résurrection des saints dans l’apocalypse de D. 16 correspond exactement au rassemblement de l’Église sanctifié dans la prière eucharistique de D. 10. D’autre part, l’idée de rassemblement est plus large que celle de résurrection: celle-ci ne concerne que les morts, tandis que celle-là inclut aussi les vivants.”

73. Cf. Seeliger, “Erwägungen,” 188.

74. *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life*, 144–68.



but must be dated at least in the last part of the 2nd century B.C.”<sup>75</sup> It is not incompatible with the concept of the resurrection of the righteous martyrs, which “continued to function in a context of persecution or oppression.” Instead, “The other theology, found in the early two-way theology, described eternal life and death as the reward and punishment for the deeds of men. In time, resurrection theology loses its connections with persecution and suffering and assumes the functions that previously belonged to the two-way theology. Resurrection begins to be stipulated as the means by which these rewards and punishments are dispensed. The two theologies mesh and complement each other.”<sup>76</sup>

This is, again, an indication of the coherence of the *Didache* as a whole. Theories of arbitrary collection of material by an anonymous “redactor” do not do justice to this continuity. My own understanding is that this text represents the position of a community and not an individual, for which it formed their rule of life.

## 7. CONCLUSION

We may conclude this brief survey of interpretations of Zechariah 14.5 in Rabbinic and Christian exegesis by suggesting that it was something of a proof text for the theology of martyrdom. It was held to demonstrate that the righteous saints who suffered faithfully to the death would be rewarded by being raised to life to return with the Lord in his eschatological judgment.

The reason for this pointed limitation of the resurrection to the righteous only is to strengthen the appeal to endurance under the fiery ordeal of *Didache* 16.5. It is only those who endure, even to the point of martyrdom, who will experience the resurrection. So the nature of “salvation by the curse itself” is highlighted by a promise and a warning.

The coming of the Lord is no doubt for judgment, but it is not judgment of the resurrected departed. Only the righteous departed, who have already been proved by their suffering, perseverance and/or martyrdom, are raised from the dead, to join the righteous living who are proved by their endurance in the suffering. The judgment will be only of the living wicked, who will be rooted out and destroyed without a remnant or trace.<sup>77</sup> There is no suggestion here of a thousand-year rule of

75. *Ibid.*, 173.

76. *Ibid.*, 173–74.

77. I do not agree with van Eijk’s argument that *Barnabas*’ picture of the resurrection of the just and the unjust for judgment (chs. 4 & 15) is a more logical

the righteous on earth or any such thing, so that the suggestion of A. Harnack,<sup>78</sup> G. E. Ladd<sup>79</sup> and (with reservations) A. P. O'Hagan,<sup>80</sup> that *Didache* 16.7 reflects millenarianism, seems unwarranted.<sup>81</sup> It is rather the theology of martyrdom which is reflected in the passage.

This is the earliest understanding of the resurrection, in my opinion, and it indicates once again, the place of the *Didache* at the earliest level of Christian tradition, with its roots strongly in its Jewish heritage, both in its interpretation of Scripture and in its theology.

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conclusion of the parenetical catechesis of the Two Ways than resurrection of the righteous only (*Résurrection*, 20). After all, the catechesis is directed at the living not the dead! It could be argued, on the contrary, that *Barnabas* presents the later and more developed schema.

78. *Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1, 186–87.

79. *The Eschatology of the Didache* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 1949).

80. A. P. O'Hagan, *Material Recreation in the Apostolic Fathers*, TU 100 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 18–30.

81. Here I agree with van Eijk, *Résurrection*, 24–25. Cf. J. Daniélou (*The Development of Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea I: The Theology of Jewish Christianity* [London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964], 377–78) who argues, rightly, that we should distinguish between elements which are “part of the common stock of Christian teaching” and those which specifically refer to the thousand year reign of the Messiah and the literal fulfilment of the promises to Israel.