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### The Removal of Sin in Second Temple Jewish Literature

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ABSTRACT

THE REMOVAL OF SIN IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

by

Odiaka G. Walker

Advisor: Felix Cortez, Ph.D.,

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE REMOVAL OF SIN IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

Name of Researcher: Odiaka G. Walker

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Felix Cortez, PhD

Date completed: December 2021

### Problem

This thesis explored the Second Temple literary background of the concept that Jesus appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin, in Heb 9:26. As such, the research question which guided the paper was: what did Old Testament and Intertestamental writers believe about the removal of sin at the end of the ages? The answer to this question infers other questions: who would remove sin? From where would sin be removed? How was sin defined? How would sin be removed? When would sin be removed (are there time specifications involved)?

### Method

The terms ἀφαιρέω, ἀφήμι, ἀπαλείφω, ἐξαλείφω, ἐξαίρω, περαιορέω, ἐκκαθαρίζω (*ekkatharizō*), and καθαρίζω (*katharizō*), for removal which is connected to ἀθέτησις (*athetēsis*), and by implication ἀθετέω (*atheteō*) used in Hebrew 9:26, were examined within an eschatological context along with ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*) and its synonyms.

Second Temple literature containing these significant terms was carefully scrutinized: Deut 32:43, Isa 25:8; 33:24; 43:25; 44:22, Mic 7:18, Zeph 3:11, 15, Zech 3:4, Dan 9:24, 1 Eno 10:20, Wis (5:13), Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33; 1QS 9:4; 11:3, 14, 15; 4Q393 2:5, 4Da 1:13 (CD 14:9), and 4Q215a 2:3.

### Results

Principally, God and the Messiah remove sin in a priest-king model where the saints' sins are atoned for, wiped away, or sinners are destroyed by the reign of the Messiah. The land of the saints is also cleansed. The restored "remnant" has its sin permanently removed from its life, God's mind, and His record. The removal of sin involves transformation of life, the Messiah's death, covenant, and inaugurated heavenly sanctuary ministry after seventy weeks. To the end of His ministry, there is a Day of atonement freedom proclamation. The time is in the "end of days" within a priest-king framework with final cleansing of the saints and final destruction of the wicked before final triumph over death and entrance into the everlasting messianic kingdom.

### Conclusions

The interpretation of the NT concept of Christ appearing at the end of the ages to remove sin (Heb 9:26) seems to demand considerations of a covenant and heavenly sanctuary ministry which are set by the "messianic personage" who is ushered in at the "end-time." His substitutionary death as part of the process of sins' removal is worth expounding. Thus, the biblical and theological context of Heb 9:26 finds its significance for a valued interpretation.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE REMOVAL OF SIN IN SECOND  
TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

A Thesis  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Religion

by  
Odiaka G. Walker

2021

THE REMOVAL OF SIN IN SECOND TEMPLE  
JEWISH LITERARY

A thesis  
presented in partial fulfillment  
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Master of Arts – Religion

by

Odiaka G. Walker

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

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Date approved

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....                                       | vi |
| Chapter   |    |
| 1. INTRODUCTION .....   | 1  |
| Statement of Problem .....  | 1  |
| Statement of Purpose .....  | 2  |
| Methodology .....   | 2  |
| Use of ἀθέτησις and ἀθετέω .....                                  | 5  |
| Key Terms and Synonyms .....                                      | 5  |
| Establishing Synonyms of ἀθετέω .....                             | 7  |
| The Use of ἀφαιρέω .....  | 10 |
| The Use of ἀφήμι .....  | 11 |
| The Use of ἀπαλείφω .....   | 11 |
| The Use of ἐξαίρω .....   | 12 |
| The Use of ἐξάλειφω .....   | 12 |
| The Use of περιαιρέω .....  | 13 |
| 2. LITERATURE REVIEW: HOW SIN IS SAID TO BE REMOVED .....         | 14 |
| 3. THE REMOVAL OF SIN AT THE END OF THE AGES .....                | 27 |
| LXX Deut 32:43: The Lord Cleanses the Land of<br>His People ..... | 27 |
| The Lord and Sovereign Judge Cleanses .....                       | 29 |
| Sin Removed from His People’s Land .....                          | 30 |
| Sin Defined: Rebellion, Idolatry, and Murder .....                | 31 |
| Sin is Removed by Cleansing Out the Land .....                    | 31 |
| Sin Removed in the “End of Days” .....                            | 33 |
| LXX Isa 25:8: God Takes Away the Reproach .....                   | 33 |
| Lord God Removes Sin .....  | 35 |
| Sin Removed from the People .....                                 | 36 |
| Sin is Reproach .....   | 36 |
| Sin is Wiped Out .....  | 37 |
| Sin Removed before the Triumph over Death .....                   | 38 |
| LXX Isa 33:24: The Sin has Been Forgiven Them .....               | 39 |
| The Great God Removes Sin .....                                   | 40 |
| Sin is Removed from ὁ λαὸς .....                                  | 41 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Sin Defined: ἡ ἁμαρτία . . . . .                                      | 41 |
| Sin Removed by Final Atonement . . . . .                              | 42 |
| Sin Removed before Entering the Kingdom . . . . .                     | 43 |
| LXX Isa 43:25: Lawless Acts Wiped and Sins Forgotten . . . . .        | 43 |
| God Removes Sin . . . . .   | 44 |
| Sin Removed from Judah . . . . .                                      | 45 |
| Sin Defined: ἀνομία and ἁμαρτία . . . . .                             | 45 |
| Sin Removed by Repentance . . . . .                                   | 46 |
| Sin Removed in the End-Time . . . . .                                 | 47 |
| LXX Isa 44:22: Lawless Acts and Sins Blotted Out . . . . .            | 49 |
| God Removes Sin from Judah . . . . .                                  | 50 |
| Sin Defined: Lawless and Acts and Sins along with Idolatry . . . . .  | 51 |
| Sin Removed: Wiping and Freedom . . . . .                             | 51 |
| Sin is Removed before Final Rejoicing . . . . .                       | 52 |
| LXX Mic 7:18: Removing Lawless Acts and Impiety . . . . .             | 53 |
| The Incomparable God Removes Sin . . . . .                            | 55 |
| Sin Removed from the Remnant . . . . .                                | 55 |
| Sin Defined: ἀνομία and ἀσεβεία . . . . .                             | 56 |
| Reformation and Redemption: Sin is Removed . . . . .                  | 57 |
| Sin Removed before Entrance into Messianic Kingdom . . . . .          | 58 |
| LXX Zeph 3:11, 15: Contemptible Acts and Injustices Removed . . . . . | 59 |
| The Lord, The King of Israel, Removes Sin . . . . .                   | 60 |
| Sin Removed from the People of Jerusalem . . . . .                    | 61 |
| Sin Defined: φαθλίσματα and ἀδικήμα . . . . .                         | 61 |
| Sin Cancelled and Lives Transformed . . . . .                         | 62 |
| Sin Removed before Final Rejoicing . . . . .                          | 66 |
| LXX Zech 3:4: Lawlessness Removed . . . . .                           | 67 |
| The Lord Removes Sin . . . . .  | 68 |
| Sin Removed from Joshua . . . . .                                     | 69 |
| Sin Defined: Filthy Garments and Lawlessness . . . . .                | 69 |
| Sin Removed: New Character . . . . .                                  | 71 |
| Sin Removed within Cosmic Conflict . . . . .                          | 72 |
| LXX Dan 9:24: Finish Sin and Erase Unrighteousness . . . . .          | 73 |
| The Messiah Removes Sin from God's People . . . . .                   | 74 |
| Sin Defined: Τὴν ἁμαρτίαν and τὰς ἀδικίας . . . . .                   | 75 |
| Sin Removed: Messiah's Death, Covenant, and Ministry . . . . .        | 76 |
| Sin Removed after Seventy Weeks . . . . .                             | 79 |
| Psalms of Solomon 17:25, 33 . . . . .                                 | 81 |
| The Messiah Removes Sin and Sinners . . . . .                         | 83 |
| Jerusalem Cleansed . . . . .  | 84 |
| Sin Defined: Living Contrary to God . . . . .                         | 84 |
| Sinners Expelled and Israel Sanctified . . . . .                      | 85 |
| Sinners Removed in the End of Time . . . . .                          | 86 |
| 1 Enoch 10:20: Make the Earth Clean . . . . .                         | 87 |
| Wisdom of Solomon 5:13: Consumed in Evil . . . . .                    | 89 |
| 1QS 9:4: Removing Iniquity and Sin . . . . .                          | 91 |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1 QS 11:3: Iniquity Removed by God’s Righteousness .....     | 93  |
| 1QS 11:14, 15: Sin’s Removed because of God’s Goodness ..... | 94  |
| 4Q393 2:5: Iniquities Removed and New Spirit Created .....   | 95  |
| CD 14:19: The Messiah Removes Sin .....                      | 96  |
| 4Q215a 2:3: All Iniquity Removed .....                       | 97  |
| 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....                              | 99  |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....   | 105 |

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <i>AUSS</i>  | <i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>  |
| BDAG         | Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. |
| <i>BHS</i>   | <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>   |
| <i>JATS</i>  | <i>Journal of Adventist Theological Society</i>   |
| LSJ          | Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott, Henry S. Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9 <sup>th</sup> . Ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.  |
| L&N          | Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.                                    |
| LXX          | The Septuagint  |
| <i>SDABC</i> | <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary</i>   |
| <i>TDNT</i>  | <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.   |
| <i>TDOT</i>  | <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. 15 vols. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1973.  |
| <i>WBC</i>   | <i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>   |

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of sin's removal holds an important place in Second Temple Jewish literature. The concerns of theodicy and eschatology along with the pressing issues of sin's continued existence, effects, and its resolution in light of God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence are taken up at length by Second Temple Jewish authors. Sin carries tremendous legal and spiritual consequences. Sin is against God and God is against sin. It is "that which separate man from God" and a "disposition to actions devoid of faith and love."<sup>1</sup> Various proposals are advanced as to how sin will be removed at the end of the ages. The positions on how sin would be removed at the end of the ages are specified as within a kingly messianic model, a priestly messianic model, a Theo-anthropic model, and a legal model. How do these cohere with the broad and dominant view from Second Temple literature? Important questions will be answered to provide a lucid understanding into how Old Testament and Intertestamental writers see the removal of sin at the end of the ages. We will conclude by considering how this literary context sheds light upon the removal of sin at the end of the ages in Hebrews 9:26.

### **Statement of Problem**

In Hebrews 9:26, along with other NT texts such as 1 John 3:5, the assertion is made that Jesus appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin. This thesis will explore

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<sup>1</sup>Wilhelm Herrmann, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Nathaniel Micklem and Kenneth A. Sanders (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 100, 101.

the literary background of this concept. As such, the research question which this thesis seeks to answer is: what did Old Testament and Intertestamental writers believe about the removal of sin at the end of the ages? The answer to this question implies other questions: who would remove sin? From where would sin be removed? How was sin defined? How would sin be removed? When would sin be removed (are there time specifications involved)?

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the literary background to the idea that Christ appeared at the end of the ages to remove sin, as found in Hebrews 9:26. This will be done by answering the key question: what did Second Temple literary authors understand concerning the removal of sin at the end of the ages? As a necessary corollary to this question, other questions will be answered such as, who would remove sin? From where would sin be removed? How was sin defined? How would sin be removed? When would sin be removed? The answer to these relevant questions will inform the interpretation of the assertion that Christ appeared at the end of the ages for the removal of sin as presented in the book of Hebrews.

### **Methodology**

Second Temple literature includes noncanonical writings of early Judaism<sup>2</sup> such as the Apocrypha, so called by Jerome, the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls or

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<sup>2</sup>T.C. Vriezen, *Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish Literature*, trans. Brian Dole (Lieden: Brill, 2005), 505. He sees the production of the Second Temple literature as between 515 BC and AD 70. Lester L. Grabbe holds that the period runs from the exilic time to Yavneh (Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jew and Judaism in the Second Temple Period vol 1: Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah*, Library of Second Temple Studies 47 [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 2).

Qumran Scrolls (discovered in caves in the 1940s near Khirbet Qumran), the works of Philo of Alexander, and Flavius Josephus (containing exegetical, philosophical, and Jewish apologetic treatise and histories of the Jews and the Herods).<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Second Temple literature includes the Old Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>4</sup>

In order to obtain the relevant data to answer the central question of this thesis, a variety of terms, in Old Testament and Intertestamental literature, which are used to indicate “removal” and “sin” within an eschatological context were identified. Since the key term ἀθέτησις (*athetēsis*), and by implication ἀθετέω (*atheteō*), is directly used in Hebrew 9:26 along with ἀμαρτία (*hamartia*), important synonyms relating to both terms will be explored. These terms: ἀφαιρέω, ἀφήμι, ἀπαλείφω, ἐξαλείφω, ἐξαίρω, περιαιρέω are selected to be discussed because they are intricately linked to ἀθετέω and appear in a context of God’s final dealing with sin. Additionally, discussion will be made on an instance of ἐκκαθαρίζω (*ekkatharizō*) and καθαρίζω (*katharizō*) due to their use in a ‘end-time’ context. For the term sin, which is connected to the above terms, various synonyms are cited in Old Testament and Intertestamental literature as indicating disobedience to God or offence to Him, which He works toward removing. These include ὄνειδος, ἀνομία, ἀσεβεία, φαυλίσμα ὁ ὕβρις, ἀδικήμα, and ἀδικία. Studies relating to sin in Old Testament and Intertestamental literature may find appropriate portrayal of its

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<sup>3</sup>George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 4, 5.

<sup>4</sup>Malka Z. Simkovich, *Discovering Second Temple Literature: The Scriptures and Stories That Shaped Early Judaism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 19, 22.

relationship to removal by examining the terminology used to express it.<sup>5</sup>

This paper examines these terminologies along with the specific Old Testament and Intertestamental texts in which they were found in order to obtain answers to the related questions such as who removes sin? From where would sin be removed? and so forth. This thesis used data from Old Testament and Intertestamental writings in the LXX (Deut, Isa, Mic, Zeph, Zech, and Dan) with Enoch, Wisdom of Solomon, and Psalms of Solomon along with Qumran sectarian documents such 1QS, 4Q393, 4QD<sup>a</sup> /CD, and 4Q215<sup>a</sup>. The list of passages from Second Temple literature containing these significant terms is Deut 32:43, Isa 25:8; 33:24; 43:25; 44:22, Mic 7:18, Zeph 3:11, 15, Zech 3:4, Dan 9:24, 1 Eno 10:20, Wis (5:13), Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33; 1QS 9:4; 11:3, 14, 15; 4Q393 2:5, 4Da 1:13 (CD 14:9), and 4Q215a 2:3 (4QTime of Righteousness).

This selected list represents those instances where the key terms identified are within an eschatological context within Second Temple literature. These texts project a final work or activity of God in dealing with the sin problem. There are other texts from Second Temple literature dealing with the removal of sin outside of the context of focus for this paper.<sup>6</sup> The list of texts above will be scrutinized exegetically to obtain answers to the focal questions. To what extent do these provide coverage on what lies behind the concepts of Hebrew 9:26? Without careful research addressing the question of how Second Temple literary authors view the removal of sin at the end of the ages, it may be

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<sup>5</sup>Miryam T. Brand, ““At the Entrance Sin is Crouching”: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature” (PhD diss., New York University, 2011), 21.

<sup>6</sup>Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13; 10:17; 19:22; Exod 32:32; 34:7, 9; Num 14:18, 19; 15:25; 1 Sam 24:11; Isa 1:16; 6:7; 27:9; 40:2; 55:7; Jer 18:23; Ezek 45:9; Job 42:14; Pss 24:18; 31:1, 5; 51:1, 9; 84:3; 108:14; Prov 4:24; 1 Chr 21:8; 1 Kgdms 15:25; 25:28; 2 Kgdms 12:13; 24:10; Sir 2:11; 28:2; 1 Macc 13:39; 2 Macc 12:42; Tob 4:21; Heir 20; Spec I 190, 229; Moses II 134, 147.

impossible to build a solid foundation for the essential message lying behind Hebrews 9:26.

In chapter one, a review of literature will be done concerning scholars' understanding of the removal of sin at the end of the ages in Second Temple literature. Their identified positions will be outlined logically. The second chapter of the thesis will provide a brief exegesis of each passage specified to be dealt with as indicated in the methodology. Answers relating to the following questions will be provided: Who would remove sin? From where would sin be removed? How was sin defined? How would sin be removed? When would sin be removed?

A conclusion will be delineated with summary of the main findings obtained. The implications for the understanding of the NT concept that Christ appeared at the end of the ages to remove sin, as found in Heb 9:26, will be presented. However, due to time and space constraints along with the specific focus of the literary background of Second Temple literature of this paper, I will not examine the internal data of the book of Hebrews as it relates to how its view harmonizes with the Second Temple views obtained in this research.

### **Key Terms and Synonyms**

#### Use of ἀθέτησις and ἀθετέω

The term ἀθέτησις (*athetēsis*) is used twice in the NT, both times in Heb 7:18; 9:26 and once in 1 Kgdms 24:12. In L&N, the term *athetēsis* is defined as invalidation in

the sense of annulment in Heb 7:18 and as removal.<sup>7</sup> The concept refers to the “process of causing something not to continue”<sup>8</sup> an “abrogation” of law,<sup>9</sup> or a “setting aside of a regulation,” or a “doing away with” something.<sup>10</sup> The prime example is from Hebrews (7:18) where the commandment of the Levitical priesthood is nullified by the inauguration of Christ’s heavenly Priesthood.

The term ἀθετέω (*atheteō*) is used sixteen times in the NT. There are fifty-four occurrences of *atheteō* in the LXX and ten in the Apocryphal writings. For the term ἀθετέω, in BDAG, it means “to reject something as invalid, declare invalid, nullify, ignore,” to “reject by not recognizing something or someone,” and “to make of no account, be insolent/offensive.”<sup>11</sup> BDAG’s first definition aligns to: “to refuse to recognize the validity of something”<sup>12</sup> and it is “to deprive a law of its force.”<sup>13</sup> L&N’s definition fits the second one of BDAG: “to believe that something cannot be trusted or relied on and hence to reject.”<sup>14</sup>

In light of the first meaning given by BDAG, one can invalidate a will (Gal 3:15),

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<sup>7</sup>L&N 681–682.

<sup>8</sup>L&N 152.

<sup>9</sup>Christian Maurer, “ἀθετέω,” *TDNT* 8:152–68.

<sup>10</sup>James Swanson, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), E-book edition, s.v. “ἀθέτησις.”

<sup>11</sup>James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), s.v. “ἀθετέω.”

<sup>12</sup>Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*, s.v. “ἀθετέω.”

<sup>13</sup>W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1981), 301, 313, 314.

<sup>14</sup>L&N 377.



the commandment of God (Mark 7:9), the purpose of God (Luke 7:30), the Law of Moses (Heb 10:28), and the grace of God (Gal 2:21). One could also not recognize a teaching or God Himself (1 Thess 4:8), the apostles, Christ or the Father (Luke 10:16), and a request (Mark 6:26), in line with the second concept. Multiple ideas seem to be found here (1 Cor 1:19): God could declare invalid, not recognize or make of no account the intelligence of the intelligent. The dominant idea found in the LXX is a “willful repudiation” where one “rebels” or “acts unfaithfully”<sup>15</sup> or even “deal treacherously with.”<sup>16</sup>

#### Establishing Synonyms of ἀθετέω

There are three vital elements in the establishment of synonyms for ἀθέτησις/ἀθετέω. They are the relationship of other terms to the ideas of Hebrews 9:26, the overlapping of meaning for the Hebrew synonyms of ἀθετέω<sup>17</sup>, and the common circumstances surrounding those associated words. The LXX, as a translation of Hebrew, has the thought world of the Hebrew Bible. In Heb 9:26, “the removal of sin” is attached to Christ’s sacrifice. In this way, the idea of sin’s removal is connected to 9:22 where ἄφεσις (aphesis) is achieved through αἱματεκχυσίας. The concept of ἄφεσις here seems to have Levitical principle involve in its background where the Hebrew סָלַח, (*sā-lāḥ*) was translated as ἀφίημι (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6; 19:22).

The *Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint* gives סוּר (*sūr*) as a unique

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<sup>15</sup>Maurer, *TDNT* 8:152–68.

<sup>16</sup>BDAG 24.

<sup>17</sup>The examination of Hebrew synonyms for ἀθετέω assisted in finding other Greek terms into which they were translated in the LXX and the texts themselves in which they are found. This aided with further searches in the LXX and Pseudepigrapha for occurrence of Greek terms with sin or its synonyms.

Hebrew alignment for *atheteō*.<sup>18</sup> This term סור is used in Zech 3:4 and parallels another Hebrew term עָבַר (*‘ā·bār*) in the same verse, both of these are translated as ἀφαιρέω. The word סור is also parallel to מָחָה (*mā·hāh*) according to the structure of usage in Isa 25:8. In the context of God’s gracious act for his people in dealing with their sin (or its synonym), סור is translated as ἀφαιρέω (Isa 6:7; 25:8; Zech 3:4), περιαιρέω (Zeph 3:11, 15), and ἀπαλλάσσω (Wis 12:2).<sup>19</sup> In three cases, סור is used within a command for man to remove πονηρία, ἀδικία, τάλαιπωρία, and σκολιὸν στόμα (ἀφαιρέω, in Isa 1:16 and Ezek 45:9; περιαιρέω in Prov 4:24). The Greek term ἀφαιρέω, in Isa 6:7, parallels περικαθαρίζω, (*perikatharizō*) in usage.

There are a number of Greek terms used to translate Hebrew words<sup>20</sup> for sin or its synonyms within situations of atonement for sin, intercession for forgiveness of sin, God’s promise of removing His people’s sin, and His dealing with sin. The correlation within the above contexts is seen among סור, עָבַר, כָּפַר (*kāpār*), אָשַׁם, וָחַט, and מָחָה (*māhāh*) for which key Greek terms are used. They demonstrate overlapping meaning when used in context where sin is dealt with. The seven instances of סור (with πονηρία, ἀνομία, ἀδικία, τάλαιπωρία, ἀδίκημα, κακία, φανλίσματα, τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ ῥυπαρὰ) are translated four times as ἀφαιρέω (Isa 1:16; 6:7; Ezek 45:9; Zech 3:4), three times as περιαιρέω (Prov 4:24; Zeph 3:11, 15), and once as ἀπαλλάσσω (Wis 12:2).

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<sup>18</sup>The *Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, Logos Research Edition (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2012), s.v. “ἀθετέω.”

<sup>19</sup>Rick Brannan, ed., “ἀπαλλάσσω,” *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020). The term סור is given as a Hebrew equivalent for ἀπαλλάσσω as used in Wis 12:2 and is also translated as such in Job 27:5; 34:5; Jer 39:31.

<sup>20</sup>The Hebrew words are translated in the LXX with interconnectedness suggesting an overlapping of meaning. Therefore, the Greek words are related since they are translated from the same Hebrew term.

For עָבַר, the five cases (with ἀνομία, κακία, ἀμάρτημα, and ἀσέβεια) have it translated as ἀφαιρέω once (Zech 3:4), περιαιρέω once (1 Chr 21:82), twice as παραβιβάζω (2 Kgdms 12:13 and 24:10), and once as ὑπερβαίνω (*hyperbainō*; Mic 7:18). In the final instance here, ὑπερβαίνω is parallel in meaning to ἐξάίρω. There are three places where עָבַר, connected with ἀνομία and ἀμαρτία, is translated as ἀφαιρέω, ἀφίημι, and περικαθαρίζω (Isa 27:9; 22:14; 6:7). In the Qumran writings, God is seen as having “סליחות” to “כפר” the sins of His people (CD-A 2:4-5). For the lost, God was not to “סלח” by “כפר” their iniquities (1QS 2:8 and 4QS<sup>b</sup> 3:2). Then, there are twelve occurrences where סָלַח in relation to ἀμαρτία or its synonym. It is translated mostly as ἀφίημι (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13; 19:22; Num 14:19; 15:15; Isa 55:7) and once as ἀφαιρέω (Exod 34:9).<sup>21</sup> The result obtains from the action of ἀφίημι (*aphiēmi*) which means to forgive,<sup>22</sup> in terms of what is produced from its action, is synonymous to ἀθέτησις (*athetēsis*). Then, the noun ἄφεσις (*aphesis*), means pardon/forgiveness or release.<sup>23</sup>

Now within similar context, נָשַׁח is translated as ἐξάίρω once (Mic 7:18), twice as αἶρω (1 Kgdms 15:25; 25:28), twice as ἀφαιρέω (Exod 34:7; Num 14:18), and seven times as ἀφίημι (Gen 50:17; Exod 32:32; Pss 24:18; 31:1, 5; 84:3; Isa 33:24). Finally, הָקַח is employed six times in affinity with ἀμαρτία or its synonym. In five places, it is translated as ἐξαλείφω (Pss 51:1, 11; 108:4; Isa 43:25; Jer 18:23), and once as ἀπαλείφω

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<sup>21</sup> סָלַח, in Exod 34:9, is parallel to נָשַׁח in v. 7 where both were translation as ἀφαιρέω.

<sup>22</sup> *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. “ἀφίημι.”

<sup>23</sup> *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, s.v. “ἄφεσις.”

(Isa 44:2). The translators of the LXX saw related and overlapping meaning among these Greek terms.

#### The Use of ἀφαιρέω

As seen above the terms being discussed are related. L&N gives περιαιρέω, καθαιρέω and, λύω as synonyms for ἀφαιρέω. The meaning of “to cause a state to cease—to do away with, to remove, to eliminate” are given.<sup>24</sup> The Lexham Research Lexicon expresses the meaning as “take away” and gives the Hebrew alignment as טור and רום.<sup>25</sup> The term is also translated from the Hebrew term מחה. מחה has affinity to the Ugaritic *mhy* meaning “Wipe away,” to the Phoenician *mhh* meaning “extinguish, wipe off,” and possibly to the Akkadian *ma ‘û* meaning “throw down, destroy, exterminate,” and Arabic *maha* meaning “wipe away.” The term מחה carries a theological meaning where what is removed may be a name from a register, sin/guilt or living beings from the face of the earth along with objects of idolatry from the land. Within the area of the removal of sin/guilt or good deeds, there are some references (Neh 4:5; 13:24; Pss 51:1, 9; 119:14; Prov 6:33; Isa 43:25; 44:22; Jer 18:23; Zech 3:9; Sir 3:14; 1QS 11:3).<sup>26</sup> The term ἀφαιρέω is used with sin or its synonym in five important place (Lev 10:17; Isa 25:8; Sir 47:11; Rom 11:27; Heb 10:4).

#### The Use of ἀφίημι

Rudolf Bultmann gives the meaning of ἀφίημι as “to release” and “to pardon.” He

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<sup>24</sup>L&N 152.

<sup>25</sup>Brannan, ed., “ἀφαιρέω,” *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Septuagint*.

<sup>26</sup>L. Alonso-Schokel, *TDOT* 8:228, 229.

indicates that the LXX usage of “to remit” has God doing the action and the use of “release” in Isa 58:6 and 61:1 has eschatological connection. The NT makes use of the term in a secular sense but more often in a religious sense. Forgiveness is God’s activity and it is not theoretical. He mentions that the term functions in an eschatological sense where there is total renewal and it is obtained on God’s judgment in the affirmation of confession of sins with repentance.<sup>27</sup> The important Hebrew alignments includes כלה (to forgive), נשא (to carry and to take away) and עזב (leave behind and let go).<sup>28</sup> The following are key passages where the term appears with sin or its synonym (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6; 19:22; 1 Macc 13:39; Sir 2:11; 28:2; Pss. Sol. 9:14; Philo [Heir 20; Spec. I 190; Moses II 147]; Matt. 6:14-15; Mark 11:22; Rom 4:7-8).

#### The Use of ἀπαλείφω

This term ἀπαλείφω means “to wipe off” or “to expunge from a register.”<sup>29</sup> Additionally, it is defined as to leave behind or erase. It has Hebrew referent in מהקח and כפר. It was used along with ἐξαλείφω to indicate what God would do with the unrepentant in the flood in Noah’s day (Gen 6:7; 7:4, 23). In its connection with sin or its synonym, a request is made to “wide away our sins” (3 Macc 2:19) and a declaration is made that God would remove sin and lawlessness (Isa 44:22).

#### The Use of ἐξαίρω

L&N has ἐκκλίω and ἀφορίζω as synonyms of ἐξαίρω with its meaning as “to

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<sup>27</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, “ἀφίημι,” *TDNT* 1:509-12.

<sup>28</sup>*The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. “ἀφίημι.”

<sup>29</sup>LSJ 87.

remove” or “exclude something”—to “get rid of something.”<sup>30</sup> BDAG adds “to drive out”<sup>31</sup> and Swanson agrees and includes “expel.”<sup>32</sup> In its central LXX usage, it means to “lift up” or to “lift off the earth.” Hebrew referents include נסע (tear out; uproot), סור (remove), נשא (carry, lift up, and take away), שמד (exterminate), and שנה (remove), among others.<sup>33</sup> Two important passages with this term are Mic 7:18 and Ezek 45:9.

### The Use of ἐξαλείφω

L&N indicates that there is a “figurative extension of meaning” of ἐξαλείφω where it is “to wipe off” or “to wipe away,” and, like the related ones above, to “cause something to cease by obliterating any evidence.”<sup>34</sup> *DBL* agrees with the above definition and adds “cancel,” “erase,” and “blotted out.”<sup>35</sup> Along with the above ideas, the LXX projects the sense of “wash away” and “plaster.” The term מזה has one of the Hebrew alignments.<sup>36</sup> In the NT, the record of our debt is wiped out or cancelled by the cross of Christ (Col 2:14) and repentance and conversion result in sins being blotted out (Acts 3:19). There are other passages where it appears with sin or its synonyms (Pss 51:1, 9; 108:14; Isa 43:25; Jer 18:23; 2 Macc 12:42; 1 En. 10:20).

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<sup>30</sup>L&N 449.

<sup>31</sup>BDAG 344.

<sup>32</sup>Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*, s.v. “ἐξαίρω.”

<sup>33</sup>*The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. “ἐξαίρω.”

<sup>34</sup>L&N 159.

<sup>35</sup>Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*, s.v. “ἐξαλείφω.”

<sup>36</sup>*The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. “ἐξαλείφω.”

## The Use of περιαιρέω

This term shares similar meaning with ἀφαιρέω (see above). Swanson suggests to “remove” or “cause a state to cease.”<sup>37</sup> Two of its Hebrew referents are סור (remove) and עבר (pass over or pass by).<sup>38</sup> It has overlapping meaning with the above terms from from common translational link and the setting of sin’s removal. It appears with these synonyms of sin: σκολιὸν στόμα (Prov 4:24), κακία (1 Chr 21:8), φαυλίσματα and ἀδίκημα (Zeph 3:11, 15), and ἁμαρτία (Heb 10:11). Before examining the specific cases in Second Temple literature where they occur in an end-time context, I will review literature relating to how sin is said to be removed in an eschatological context in Second Temple times.

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<sup>37</sup>Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*, s.v. “περαιρέω.”

<sup>38</sup>*The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. “περαιρέω.”

## CHAPTER 1

### LITERATURE REVIEW: HOW SIN IS SAID TO BE REMOVED

As I participate in the ongoing discourse, the conversation observed notes multiple assessments of the final removal of sin in in the Second Temple. A single view or multiple views were posited where sin is dealt with within a legal framework, a kingly messianic, priestly messianic, or a ‘theo-anthropic’ framework. Within the legal setting, God gives the sentence of punishment, the justification, or vindication of His people. The kingly messianic model has the Messiah as God’s agent who destroys sinners, saves His people, establishes a kingdom. The priestly messianic model evinces the concept that the Messiah makes atonement for the cleansing of His people. The view of the theo-anthropic model involves God and the believing community working to bring cleansing of sin in the believers who are in the end-times and are “a house of holiness.”

Miryam T. Brand investigates the origin of sin in Second Temple literature. He proposes that man’s choice resulted in his evil inclination. Philo’s treatment seems not to be on the final dealing with sin. He believes that Philo’s discourses directly deal with the issue of sin but with the main focus to show that God is not responsible for sin nor evil. Sin and evil stem from deviation on the part of man and matter.<sup>39</sup>

Jonathan Klawans analyzes the defiling power of sin in ancient Judaism. He discusses sin’s ritual and moral defiling power and states that “the ultimate consequence

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<sup>39</sup>Brand, “At the Entrance Sin is Crouching,” 208.



of sin in the texts of the Second Temple period is usually exile” and even threat of the utter destruction of Israel.<sup>40</sup> He notes that 1 En. does not portray sin as defiling the earth or the sanctuary. This is reasonable since the focused event occur before there was a sanctuary erected. Why would it not give the idea of the earth’s defilement?<sup>41</sup> He posits that “moral purity is achieved by punishment, by atonement, or by not committing morally impure acts in the first place.”<sup>42</sup> These points would touch on a legal and priestly concept on the removal of sin.

According to Gary A. Anderson who explored the development of the concepts of sin, when one sins, something concrete happens: one’s hands may become stained, one’s back may become burdened, or one may fall into dept. When sin is dealt with, stained hands are cleansed, burdens are lifted, and debts are either paid off or remitted. He further notes that the embedded concepts within the metaphors used to point to sin and forgiveness should be carefully attended to in order to correctly understand those allusions.<sup>43</sup> Here, again one may discern priestly and legal ideas.

Lester L. Grabbe outlines the beliefs, practices, and religious history of the Jews during Second Temple times, and running from Nehemiah’s time to the time of Christ. He recognizes the major theme in *Liber Antiquitatum Bilicarum* (Pseudo-Philo) as sin-punishment-repentance-salvation. This document, he says, was a paraphrase of the Bible from Gen to 2 Sam 28 which may have been written to give hope to those who survived

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<sup>40</sup>Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 60.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>43</sup>Gary A. Anderson, *Sin: A History* (Hartford: Yale University, 2009), 4.

the war of AD 66–70.<sup>44</sup> He mentions that during the Persian period a theology of land was developed that followed the pattern of sin-punishment-exile-repentance-return. He holds that exile from their land was the worst form of punishment for the Jews.<sup>45</sup> Grabbe says that the *Testament of Abraham* declares that Abraham witnessed the judgment of the souls of the dead.<sup>46</sup> Who were these individuals that Abraham saw? Why were they to be punished? These and many other questions are left unanswered. However, the legal aspects are present here.

Grabbe believes the development of messianic views came from the reference in Isa 45:1. The term means ‘anointed,’ a passive form, referring to kings and high priests in the OT, even though Cyrus was called God’s anointed (Isa 45:1). He thinks various messianic concepts emerged during “revolutionary Judaism” in the Second Temple period.<sup>47</sup> He mentions that messianic themes of the Second Temple times point to a “king-priest” and “warrior-judge” who would be a personage of earth or heaven.<sup>48</sup> From the Psalms of Solomon, he comments that the Messiah was looked forward to come and rule, liberate Jerusalem, remove sinners from its territory, destroy the lawless, and gather a holy people (17:23).<sup>49</sup> The Messiah would judge a people who have been sanctified (v. 32) and he would be the anointed Lord (v. 35). The messiah or messiahs would officiate

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<sup>44</sup>Lester Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London: Routledge, 2000), 95.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 298.

<sup>46</sup>Lester L. Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel, and Jesus* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 92.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 81.

over the religious services or feasts (1QS<sup>a</sup> 2:11).<sup>50</sup> This perspective seem to indicate a king-priest model.

George W. E. Nickelsburg provides an overview of Second Temple literature. He sees the treatment of sin, as he analyzes the book of *Jubilees*, being dealt with within a system where sin occurs, there is punishment, a turning point, and then salvation.<sup>51</sup> He indicates that this particular pattern is obtained from the book of Deuteronomy (chaps 28-32). For him, this framework of sin-punishment-repentance-salvation is reflected in *Jubilees* (1; 23:16-32) and the *Testament of Moses* (3:1-4; 3:5-4:4; 4:5-9).<sup>52</sup> It would be of some value to the discussion to see what critical views there are against Nickelsburg's position. Nonetheless, a legal framework is seen here.

Nickelsburg perceives an eschatological hope within the *Psalms of Solomon* wherein which the nation of Israel and its struggles will be rectified. He identifies the feature of sin and punishment therein (chaps. 1, 2, 8, and 11).<sup>53</sup> Nickelsburg declares that in the *Psalms of Solomon* there is the expression of the desire for God to send the “anointed of the Lord” (17:32). This was to be the “latter day” fulfillment of the promises, made long ago, concerning David's son. He also states that though the Messiah would be a human, he would possess divine attributes and is endued with divine characteristics. The Messiah would re-establish Israel, in terms of its physical reign, and

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<sup>50</sup>Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism*, 82.

<sup>51</sup>Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 71-72.

<sup>52</sup>Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 73.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 136.

cleanse her from sins.<sup>54</sup> This coheres to a king-priest model.

In his analysis of 1QH<sup>a</sup> 11(3):19-23, he sees an eschatological cleansing by the Lord that made man into a new creature who then would fellowship with angels, being delivered from Belial, hell, and judgment. He believes that entrance into the community would be membership among the eschatological chosen who will inherit eschatological salvation.<sup>55</sup> A priestly conception is identified here.

John J. Collins provides an excellent introduction to the content and focus of Jewish apocalyptic writings. He surveyed materials which portray a definite eschatological orientation. He points out that the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* convey in a consistent manner the pattern of sin-exile-return. He states that this is a common concept of Deuteronomistic theology.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, he discusses the feature of the Apocalypse of Weeks in 1 En. 93 which outlines the schematization of history. He notes that the pattern of “sin and salvation” is present. Noah, Abraham, and Elijah received salvation which represent favor for the saints. A time of wickedness occurs, then there is separation of the elect, destruction of the wicked, and salvation for the righteous.<sup>57</sup> This points to a legal and kingly method.

Collins suggests that the final dealing with sin relates to the destruction of sinners by certain judgment. He, in *Jubilees*, sees that it also paints a picture of the universe and

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<sup>54</sup>Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 241-43.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 238.

<sup>56</sup>John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2nd Ed., The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 136.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 64-5. He even sees an eschatological pattern of crisis in the book of Revelation—persecution, judgment, and salvation, seen in the series of visions of the seals, trumpets, and bowls, 272. He thinks there are references in 1 En. to both supernatural and human causes to earthly sinfulness, 61-67.

history where those who are good will have victory. There is a crisis, not political, but of piety within the Jewish community. The book of *Jubilees* responds by endorsing the Mosaic law and appealing to the angel, and the heavenly tablets.<sup>58</sup>

Collins proposes, in relation to the *Sibylline Oracle 3*, that sin would come to an end by a final king or kingdom. The *Sibylline Oracles*, he says, outlines a struggle for kingship and sovereignty and lists, at the most, ten kingdoms. He believes a common pattern is discernable in the book where sin brings disaster and great misfortunes which comes to an end by the coming of a king or kingdom. The Babylonian exile and subsequent restoration is mentioned with a king of Egypt who stops disaster. There will be a kingdom that God will raise up in the future.<sup>59</sup>

The term *māšîaḥ*, according to Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins, occurs some thirty-nine times in the Hebrew Bible. It is mostly used to refer to kings who were anointed as being divinely authorized (1 Sam 2:10; 24:7; Ps 132:10; Isa 45:1). It is rendered in the LXX as *Christos* but transliterated from Hebrew into Greek as *Μεσσίας*, which the English “Messiah” is derived.<sup>60</sup> These reveal a kingly approach to the removal of sin.

Many Jewish authors in the Second Temple period had an eschatological outlook. Michael O. Wise indicates that this was to the degree that the Temple Scroll at Qumran was called an “eschatological code” for essential guidance during the “end of days.” The

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<sup>58</sup>Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 84.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>60</sup>Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 418.

eschaton was imminent where the wicked era would be ended.<sup>61</sup> Wise believes that Israel, and the Qumran community in particular, set out to obey the laws of God in order that God would end His judgment on them, restore them to their land, and end the wicked era at the eschaton or “end of days.”<sup>62</sup> There appears to be a legal and Theo-anthropic view in place here.

According to Steven Hultgren, there will be an “eschatological victory of truth over sin” where the “God of truth” effects the end of sin. The wicked will be destroyed and the “eschatological goal of history” which is “the destruction of sin” would be accomplished.<sup>63</sup> To what exact extent this specific assessment, of truth gaining victory over sin, runs through Second Temple literature is beyond the focus of this paper. In an effort to cooperate with God, the Qumran community sought to understand the mystery of existence and to clearly comprehend primeval affairs which would help them to understand what the future holds.<sup>64</sup> This gives the impression of a kingly and Theo-anthropic assessment in place.

Albert L. A. Hogeterp explored the overarching view of covenant and the apocalyptic conceptions of the Qumran community. In examining 1QpHab, 4QpPs<sup>a</sup> and 4QpNah, he posits that they reveal “judgment as part of their eschatological perspective.” Divine judgment would be against the “Kittim” to totally eliminate their rule. Evildoers

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<sup>61</sup>Michael O. Wise, *A Critical Study of the Temple Scroll from Qumran Cave 11*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 49 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 175, 183.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 183.

<sup>63</sup>Steven Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community: Literary, Historical, and Theological Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 66 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 420.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 336.

will be convicted, while idol worshipers, wickedness, the destroyers nations, and sinners would come under destructive retribution. At the same time, the saints would come under “eschatological vindication.”<sup>65</sup>

Hogeterp indicates that 4QPseudo-Daniel<sup>a</sup> (4Q243) viewed the defeat and death of the “sons of wickedness” and salvation of the saints as occurring in the “eschatological period.”<sup>66</sup> He shows that the “Eschatological Hymn” of 4QPs (4Q88) 9:1-15 mentions God’s final judgment in which He will remove the wicked from the earth. He further explains that there will be a final judgment which brings the age of wickedness to an end with all iniquity. At the same time, an era of justice, called the age of peace, will be ushered in. Divine wrath will wipe out wickedness (4QTime of Righteousness).<sup>67</sup> Other documents hold the expectation of the time when sin, in the world, would meet total demise and the time of truth will be established (4QInstruction; 4Q416, 1:13; 3:3).<sup>68</sup> The portrayal here is of a predominantly kingly model.

Hogeterp believes that 1 En. announces the motif of eschatological punishment for sinners and salvation for the saints. He sees 1 En. 10 as having the idea of a day of final judgment. He expounds that the ultimate judgment of the Evil angels was placed within the framework of the destruction of the wicked and the everlasting establishment of righteousness (10:11-22).<sup>69</sup> In this instance, there seems to be a legal perspective.

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<sup>65</sup>Albert L. A. Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End: A Comprehensive Traditio-Historical Study of Eschatological, Apocalyptic and Messianic Ideas in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 83 (Leiden: Brill 2009), 379.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 355.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 376.

<sup>68</sup>Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant*, 122.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 32, 126.

Hultgren further states that the Qumran community believed in the “utter impossibility of human righteousness apart from justification by the mercy of God.” He states that they realized the “enduring problem of sin” which would “be solved only by an eschatological act of purification and justification by God.”<sup>70</sup> He sees the community positing a comprehensive nature of God’s righteousness which, influenced by the OT, not only provides forgiveness of sin, repentance, perfection of path, deliverance from the power of Belial but will cause destruction of sin forever and bring truth to victory in the eschatological salvation for the elect. Thus, God’s righteousness is the basis for the removal of sin and being found worthy in the final judgment.<sup>71</sup> There is a discernable kingly, priestly, and legal model present.

He believes that the Qumran community, in particular, looked for the eschatological fulfillment of God’s covenant where they would be cleansed from their iniquities by the holy spirit. A day would come where God would extirpate the “power of injustice” and purify the very structure of man by cleansing him by the Holy Spirit. He deliberates that the members of the community had the possibility of “perfection of path” wherein which if they persevere, they would receive “eschatological salvation.” Within the eschaton, there would be “full and permanent purification of the members of the community.” The power of injustice and the angel of darkness, which affect everyone in the community, would be finally disposed.<sup>72</sup> This is what I would call the pneuma-anthropoc model—the Holy Spirit working in the community of believers. According to

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<sup>70</sup>Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant*, 447.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 448.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 451.



Geza Vermes, for the Qumran community, “the impending manifestation of God’s triumph over evil and darkness in the end of days ... already had begun.”<sup>73</sup>

David Flusser notes that in the eschaton, eagerly anticipated during Second Temple times, “the sinning Israel” would be destroyed.<sup>74</sup> In discussing 1QS, he proposes that there would be a final work of thorough purity for those whom God will claim as His own. He sees, in the document examined, “an unbridgeable gap between mankind and God” because mankind is “inherently sinful” and affected by the “dominion of Belial.” However, restoration of the saints would come at the “end of days” when the reign of evil would be abolished and the saints ultimately cleared of all sins.<sup>75</sup> He indicates that Qumran community separated themselves from sons of Belial and wanted to do God’s will consistently in every affair of life. He states that Josephus expressed that they would show respect to all especially the ruling powers (Flusser states that this subjection was only temporary). They wanted to walk in perfection (1QS 9:6).<sup>76</sup> There seems to be a combination of the kingly, priestly, and Theo-anthropic models here.

Peter W. Flint indicates that in 1 En. 6 angels made a decision marry humans and bound themselves in curses to do the “great sin” (6:3). They carried out their evil plan on earth and produced giant children who sinned against animals, plants, and even became cannibals (7:5). Asael is the angel who led in the production of weapons and cosmetics

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<sup>73</sup>Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scroll in English* (London, England: Penguin Books, 2004), 3.

<sup>74</sup>David Flusser, *Qumran and Apocalypticism*, Judaism of Second Temple Period, trans. Azzan Yadin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1:16.

<sup>75</sup>Flusser, *Qumran and Apocalypticism*, 19-21.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 16.

(8:1) resulting in ungodly practices. Four unfallen angels took a report to heaven about the condition on earth. They mentioned Azazel and Semyaza as leaders in promoting evil on the earth (9:6-9).

Flint continues to explain that the four angels were given a divine mission. Uriel was to warn of a coming destructive flood. Raphael would arrest Azazel and confine him into darkness as he awaits a fiery end. Gabriel would destroy the children of fornicators and watchers (10:9-10). Michael would go to ensure the end of Semyaza and his followers' children. Then, he would bound him and place him in an abyss of fire. The earth would be cleansed of all pollution of evil and a new paradise of righteousness would come (10:13-22).<sup>77</sup> There is a legal and kingly concept at play here.

God is identified as the one who brings sin to its final end. Laszlo Gallusz holds that "God will make all things new," which is a cherished hope throughout the earliest years of the earth. It is said to be the "eschatological goal," one of the major themes of the biblical story-line.<sup>78</sup> J. Richard Middleton views the biblical story of sin and redemption as constituting the "rudiments of a plot" which may be "summarized as creation-fall-redemption (sometimes with the addition of consummation)." There is a movement from the Lord's original purposes for the world, "through a fundamental problem" which hinders God's plan from being fulfilled to a "repairing" of the problem.<sup>79</sup> God's ultimate operation is to bring sin to an end. He works to remove "fundamental

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<sup>77</sup>Peter W. Flint, ed., *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 134-36.

<sup>78</sup>Laszlo Gallusz, "Radically New Beginning—Radically New End: Creation and Eschatology in the New Testament," *JATS* 29, No. 1-2 (2018): 251.

<sup>79</sup>J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 34.

anti-creational elements—sin, evil, and death,” according to Middleton.<sup>80</sup> The Lord will destroy “sin and evil” and give salvation to His people and destruction for the wicked.<sup>81</sup>

Both views seem to agree to a kingly framework.

Though the book of *Ben Sira* does not deal with the theme of the removal of sin at the end of the ages, W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein declare that his book assumes the posture as the “last of the wise.” In *Ben Sira* (Ecclesiasticus), one is encouraged to grow in wisdom (even to drink deeply of it), practice patience and charity, along with valuing discipline and discerning between good and evil.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, though Ecclesiastes does not envision a “transcendent eschatology,” one should be faithful to God and know the difference between good and evil.<sup>83</sup> He shares further that the book of Judith may portray an apocalyptic theme of God against the ‘god’ Nebuchadnezzar as his army prepare to battle Israel. It is said therein that the history of Israel reveals them as “invincible as long as they remain faithful to their God.”<sup>84</sup> This seems to be a Theo-anthropic idea.

Jacques Doukhan, in his explication of Daniel 9:24-27, identifies the role of the Messiah as one relating to atonement which removes sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. This usage of the term in Daniel, he believes, is an “absolute exceptional use in the OT usage” because “He is the Messiah par excellence.”<sup>85</sup> There is hot scholarly

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<sup>80</sup>Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 78.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>82</sup>W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein, *Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 2 of The Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 417, 418.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>85</sup>Jacques Doukhan, “The Seventy Weeks of Dan 9: An Exegetical Study,” (1979), Faculty Publications, Paper 79, <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/old-testament-pubs/79>, 9, 21.

debate on the exact timing of the emergence of messianic expectations during Second Temple times and in particular in the Qumran community. The controversy hinges on whether there is a single or multiple messiahs. However, Eric F. Mason holds that the overwhelming scholarly consensus seems to be that the Messiah/Messiahs would be an eschatological personage.<sup>86</sup> Mason states that the expected priestly Messiah of the Qumran community would make atonement, instruct in the law, directs the eschatological battle, and leads the eschatological banquet.<sup>87</sup> These models fit a priestly one.

The examination of the authors' works above reveal a different focus from this paper. They mention in passing the matter of sin's removal at the end of the ages but not in a concentrated manner. The concerns they have found were not pursued with a deliberate emphasis on examining the removal of sin at the end of the ages. This thesis will take up the point of sin's removal at the end of the ages which was either identified but not concentratedly pursued or left not scrutinized. This might very well be the first paper with the sole focus of surveying the removal of sin at the end of the ages in OT, Intertestamental, or Second Temple literature.

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<sup>86</sup>Eric F. Mason, *'You Are a Priest Forever': Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 72.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 72.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE REMOVAL OF SIN AT THE END OF THE AGES

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the removal of sin at the end of the ages in Second Temple literature. The examination focuses on texts which display the removal of sin within an “end of the age” reference. Passages from LXX Isaiah, one from LXX Deuteronomy, one from LXX Micah, then from LXX Zephaniah, LXX Zechariah, LXX Daniel, along with 1 Enoch, Wisdom of Solomon, and six Qumran texts will be addressed. These are both Greek and Hebrew Second Temple texts.

#### **LXX Deut 32:43: The Lord Cleanses the Land of His People**

εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ἅμα αὐτῷ,  
καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ υἱοὶ θεοῦ·  
εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ,  
καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ·  
ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται,  
καὶ ἐκδικήσει, καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς·  
καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει,  
καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ Κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.<sup>88</sup>

Delight, O heavens, with him  
and worship him, *you* sons of God.  
Delight, O nations, with his people  
and prevail with him, all *you* angels of God.  
For he will avenge the blood of his sons,  
and he will avenge and he will repay the enemies with vengeance,  
and he will repay those who hate,

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<sup>88</sup>Henry B. Swete, ed., *The Old Testament in Greek: According to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), Is 25:8. The Greek quotations of the OT, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha will be from the above work unless otherwise noted.

and the Lord will cleanse out the land of his people. (LXX Deut 32:43).<sup>89</sup>

The passage highlights a call to heaven and the nations to rejoice at God's judgments which exterminate the enemies and cleanse out the land of His people. The book of Deuteronomy is the fifth of the Pentateuch. Its Mosaic authorship has been challenged by numerous scholars. Christoph Bultmann believes that the book embodies the key theological focus of the seventh to fifth centuries BC by anonymous authors.<sup>90</sup> This position was set forth in the *Classical Documentary Hypothesis*, called the Graf-Wellhausen theory. Within the JEDP source theory, the D document is said to represent the main part of Deuteronomy which is believed to have been written in Josiah's time.<sup>91</sup> Though this position has enjoyed wide acceptance in the scholarly world, it has been challenged and found flawed.<sup>92</sup> Conservative scholars still hold the Mosaic authorship as the best explanation of the book's origin due to the internal biblical references to Moses' writing activity, abilities, and the traditional Jewish acceptance of same.

The text under discussion falls within the sixth section of the book where the leadership responsibilities are laid down. The text is under the subsection of Moses' song of victory and parting admonition (31:30-33:29). The poem outlines the rebellion of Israel against God of their salvation (vv. 15-18). Their punishment by God for their apostasy is spelt out (vv. 19-25). The subsequent judgment on the enemies of Israel and

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<sup>89</sup>Ken M. Penner, ed., *The Lexham English Septuagint*, Second Edition (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), Is 25:8. The English translation of the LXX will be from the above work unless otherwise noted.

<sup>90</sup>Christoph Bultmann, "Deuteronomy," *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 135.

<sup>91</sup>William S. Lasor, David A. Hubbard, and Frederic W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 97.

<sup>92</sup>Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 67-70.

their ultimate restoration are given (vv. 26-43). The verse and the phrase with the key word ἐκκαθαρίζω (*ekkatharizō*) is translated variously. The LXX gives “and the Lord will cleanse the land of His people.”<sup>93</sup> Brenton is about the same: “and the Lord shall purge the land of His people.”<sup>94</sup> Translations of the MT have slight variation. The NRSV has “and cleanse the land for His people.” The NKJV gives “He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people” (translators emphasis). The NET is similar to the NKJV but has “His land people.” The BHS has “וְכִפֶּר אֶתְּמַלְכוּתוֹ עָמּוֹ”—“and atone for His land His people.”<sup>95</sup>

### The Lord and Sovereign Judge Cleanses

The verse begins with the command to rejoice which is addressed to the heavens and the nations. The “וְטִי” introduces the reason for such jubilation: the sovereign God will bring retributive judgment on the destroyer of His people and cleanse His people’s land. This is divine action. This summons to celebrate concludes the song. David F. Payne suggests that “behind the dramatic imagery, there is found a blend of “rebuke, warning, appeal, and promise.”<sup>96</sup> The God of absolute authority will vindicate His rule by His own power (v. 39). This will result in the vindication of His people. The one who delivers the powerless is judge (vv. 36-38) but He will destroy those who destroy His people. He disciplines His people but will not cast them away. There will be compassion

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<sup>93</sup>My translation.

<sup>94</sup>Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament: English Translation* (London: Bagster, 1870), Dt 32:43.

<sup>95</sup>My translation.

<sup>96</sup>David F. Payne, *Deuteronomy*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001, c1985), 184.

for His people and overthrow for the enemies.<sup>97</sup>

### Sin Removed from His People's Land

Bultmann believes that the last stich of v. 43 moves beyond the drive of the hymn and “addresses the question of impurity and atonement.” He thinks the LXX and 4QDeut has the cleansing of the land in view while the MT has both the people and the land.<sup>98</sup> Following the concept of the LXX, the atonement or cleansing of the land, due to the context, would include God destroying enemy forces (vv. 41-43). The enemies produce “vine of Sodom” and twig from Gomorrah (vv. 31-33) along with gall and bitterness (v. 32). With their destructive treatment of Israel, they have an abominable lifestyle which will incur God's wrath. Judgment is good news for His people (v. 36) but for the enemies it would be dread because they would be expelled.

Jeffrey H. Tigay points out that in Num 35:33 God spills the enemies' blood to cleanse the land of the Israelites' blood that they had shed.<sup>99</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton believe that God remove the results of the sins of the people. “He cleanses the land of His people from the impurities caused by their sins.”<sup>100</sup> Additionally,

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<sup>97</sup>Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: Knox, 1990), 232.

<sup>98</sup>Bultmann, “Deuteronomy,” 156.

<sup>99</sup>Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 314.

<sup>100</sup>Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Deuteronomy*, UBS handbook series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 563.



the people would be cleansed of idolatry (vv. 26-38), purged of their sins, and restored to covenant faithfulness.<sup>101</sup>

### Sin Defined: Rebellion, Idolatry, and Murder

The poem gives some clues on the sins that would offend God. The sin of rebellion is pointed out (vv. 15-18). The expression “ἐνκατέλιπεν τὸν θεὸν τὸν ποιήσαντα αὐτόν” captures what they did (v. 15). They left their Creator. The sin of apostasy is seen (vv. 19-25). “They are a perverse generation,” “δείξω τί ἔσται αὐτοῖς ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων ἡμερῶν” (v. 20). The “vine of Sodom” may link to immorality and unethical practices (v. 32). The devotion of the people to idols has not profited them—it was an exercise in futility (v. 37-38). There was also murder of Israelites by their enemies (v. 43). A similar expression to “τὸ αἶμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ” is found in Gen 4:10 and 11—“αἵματος τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ” and “τὸ αἶμα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ.” Cain committed murder. The enemies did this to the Israelites. After discipline, God would restore His people but the enemies will be no more.

### Sin is Removed by Cleansing Out the Land

The “Song of Moses” which celebrates “the loving faithfulness of Jehovah to His apostate and ungrateful people” points to how He removes sin.<sup>102</sup> God is portrayed as a “divine warrior with sword and bow and arrow in [His] hand.” He advances to carry out “executive actions” to establish moral order and His just rule in the world.<sup>103</sup> As

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<sup>101</sup>Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, 1994), 425.

<sup>102</sup>John E. McFadyen, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Armstrong, 1906), 50.

<sup>103</sup>Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 232.

indicated, the Qumran and LXX renderings has “the land of His people” (v. 43). Here, land is the object of the verb ἐκαθαρίζω. This verb, a translation from the Hebrew “כפר,” means to “appease, make amends, make atonement, make good.”<sup>104</sup> The Lord would make amends for the land by bringing sure death to the enemies of His people (vv. 39, 43).

The MT has both land and people as objects—“for his land, for his people.”<sup>105</sup> The idea may be linked to what God does to the enemies and what He does for the His people. He will comfort His people (v. 36) but He will destroy the enemies (vv. 42-43). In v. 39, the two actions of “kill” and “strike” would be against the enemies while “make alive” and “heal” would be for His servants. There would be righteous indignation for the wicked and deliverance for His people. Eugene H. Merrill links the action of cleansing the land to reconciliation. She went on to state that God’s wayward people “would be purged of their sins” and “restored to perfect covenant relationship with the Lord.”<sup>106</sup> Adan Clark connects the cleansing out of the land to Christ’s death on the cross and salvation for all. One struggle with how Christ’s death has expelled the enemies of His people from the land. Yet, cleansing is linked to redemption.<sup>107</sup>

### Sin Removed in the “End of Days”

The passage indicates that God would act at a time when Israel was at its

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<sup>104</sup>*The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. “ἐκαθαρίζω.”

<sup>105</sup>Payne, *Deuteronomy*, 184.

<sup>106</sup>Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 425.

<sup>107</sup>Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary: Deuteronomy*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Clarke's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1999), Dt 32:43.

weakest—its extremity is God’s opportunity (v. 36). The ultimate fulfillment of this promise relates to the new earth.<sup>108</sup> The act of cleansing calls for a universal rejoicing. The terms “οὐρανοί” and “ἔθνη” suggest that the action is final (v. 43). “The enemies” may indicate that all entities that stand against God’s plans and trample on His people are dealt with decisively. The phrase “and there is none that will deliver from my hands” may suggest that evil has run its course to its final end. The furthest limits of God’s forbearance have been reached—what was sealed and stored up (v. 34). This seems to be a definite end-time scenario of final salvation for God’s people and total destruction for the wicked. God “will show what shall happen to them in the last days,”<sup>109</sup> “δείξω τί ἔσται αὐτοῖς ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων ἡμερῶν” (v. 20)

### **LXX Isa 25:8: God Takes Away the Reproach**

Though studies on the book of Isaiah have sought to unveil strategies behind the book’s arrangement, the voice of Yahweh echoes through its chapters and demands an appropriate response.<sup>110</sup> The book of Isaiah has four instances of the eschatological removal of Sin occurring within the fourth and sixth sections of the book.<sup>111</sup> The book is found in the second division of the Hebrew Bible called Prophets and is referred to as “the book of the prophet Isaiah” (Luke 4:17), and he is referred to as “the Prophet Isaiah” (Matt 3:3; 4:14; Luke 3:3; John 12:38; Acts 8:30). As the son of Amoz, of royal descent,

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<sup>108</sup>Francis D. Nichol, ed., *SDABC: The Holy Bible with Exegetical and Expository Comment.*, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 4 (Washington: Review and Herald, 1978), 1071.

<sup>109</sup>Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*, Dt 32:20.

<sup>110</sup>Andrew T. Abernethy, “God’s People in Isaiah: Trembling at God’s Word,” *Reflections: Essays in Honor of Eugene Carpenter* (2015): 28.

<sup>111</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 93.

he was called to prophetic ministry near the end of Uzziah's reign (1:1; 6) and continued for Jotham's, Ahaz's, and Hezekiah's reign. He was possibly killed by Manasseh.<sup>112</sup> His message points to a pattern of complication and resolution, divine judgment and redemption. Isaiah 1 and 65–66 framed the book around the pattern of judgment and salvation.<sup>113</sup>

Isaiah presented the indictment of uncleanness and the remedy of divine salvation for the help of the people. The solution to the sin problem is revealed and clear reasons for such divine activity were given. His own experience, the recognition of his sin, and his cleansing became the basis for his message to Israel (Isa 1:8; 6:7).<sup>114</sup> The first mention of the mediatorial altar, found in 6:7, was where the cleansing agent was taken from, a link to mediatorial intercession work of God as the basis for the removal of sin.<sup>115</sup> Though proposals placed the book as of two or three authors, and the work of redactional unity,<sup>116</sup> “All the ancient testimony points to Isaiah as being one book.”<sup>117</sup> The internal

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<sup>112</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 88.

<sup>113</sup>Abernethy, “God’s People in Isaiah,” 28.

<sup>114</sup>Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, 242.

<sup>115</sup>Frank B. Holbrook, “The Israelite Sanctuary,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Lesher (Washington: The Review and Herald, 1981), 16.

<sup>116</sup>Guido Benzi, “Synchronic and Diachronic Dynamics of the Entire Book of Isaiah: For A New Commentary on Isa 1-66,” *Salesianum* 79 (2017):412, 416, 418. Though he proposed that “diachronic studies indicate that the book of Isaiah is far from being merely the result of a random and disorderly amalgamation of texts,” his approach takes a historical critical form with an aim to produce a “plausible theory” which would show how the different chapters of Isaiah emerged overtime.

<sup>117</sup>R. Coggins, “Isaiah,” *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, eds. John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 436.

evidences and the NT references confirmed it as by one author.<sup>118</sup>

κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας, καὶ πάλιν ἀφεῖλεν Κύριος ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἀπὸ παντὸς προσώπου· τὸ ὄνειδος τοῦ λαοῦ ἀφεῖλεν ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς γῆς, τὸ γὰρ στόμα Κυρίου ἐλάλησεν.

Death, having power, swallowed; and again, the Lord God took away every tear from every face; he took away the reproach of the people from all the land, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken (LXX Isa 25:8).

### Lord God Removes Sin

Isaiah used the expression “Lord God” (Κύριος ὁ θεός), from Hebrew *Adonay YHWH* (יהוה יְהוָה), in the second phrase and used the third person singular verb, ἀφεῖλεν, in the third to point to the same agent behind actions of removing sin. The term Κύριος is used some 428 times and θεός over 183 times in the book of Isaiah. Both are used in verses separately, in parallel construction and other wise, to refer to God numerous times.<sup>119</sup> It is used in apposition many times also, as in our text.<sup>120</sup> He is Creator (42:5), redeemer (43:1), ruler (37:16), the Holy One (43:15), unconquerable (43:12), and judge (51:22). He saves (60:16), found Israel (43:1), eliminates enemies (42:13), has no rival

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<sup>118</sup>Critics proposed that the book of Isaiah was written by two authors: first Isaiah (chaps. 1-39) and second or “Deutero-Isa” (chaps. 40-66). They assume that the human authors (the Bible not being divinely inspired according to them) cannot predict the future. The evidence for one Isaiah writing the entire book is overwhelming. The NT authors quoted from all sections of the book as by one author (Rom 9:27; cf. Isa 10:22-23; Rom 9:29; cf. Isa 1:9; Rom 10:20; cf. Isa 53:1; Rom 15:21; cf. Isa 52:15). Christ Himself quoted from both sections as by one author (John 12:38-41; cf. Isa 6:9-10; 53:1). Its unique vocabulary also attests to its unity by one author (“the Holy One of Israel” chaps. 1-39 has twelve instances, chaps. 40-66 has thirteen; “the Mighty One of Israel/Jacob” is only found in Isa, 1:24; 49:26; 60:16; “says the LORD” [יהוה יְהוָה] found nine times in the Bible with five times in Isa, 1:11, 18; 33:10; 41:21; 66:9). Additionally, both 1QIs<sup>a</sup> and 1QIs<sup>b</sup> (Qumran Scrolls, 1000 years older than current Heb. MSS) have the chapter (39 and 40) moving one after another without breaking to suggest two or more books.

<sup>119</sup>Isa 3:17; 5:16; 8:10; 12:2; 25:9; 30:18; 33:22; 37:4, 16; 49:5, 7; 51:15; 52:12; 54:5, 6; 60:16, 19; 66:9.

<sup>120</sup>Isa 17:6; 21:17; 25:8; 37:21; 38:5; 41:17, 21; 42:5, 6, 8, 13, 21; 43:1, 10, 12, 14, 15; 44:2; 45: 1, 3, 5-7, 11, 18; 48:17; 51:22.

(42:8). Isaiah declares that the Lord God will, after removing the reproach from His people, destroy death and dry every tear.

### Sin Removed from the People

The construction “τὸ ὄνειδος τοῦ λαοῦ” has the accusative standing before a genitive. The “τὸ ὄνειδος” belongs to “τοῦ λαοῦ.” Here, “we have entered into the deepest and innermost desires of the heart of God.”<sup>121</sup> Yes, death, tears, and also reproach stemming from sin which lies at the very cause of those things, God will remove. The text indicates that the Lord took the reproach of the people from the land. That which is offensive to God on the land is found within the people. Death being swallowed up seems to give the hint that what caused death, which is sin, is removed from the people—Zion, a reference to Judah (25:5).

### Sin is Reproach

Isaiah asserts that τὸ ὄνειδος will be taken away by the Lord. This word is used twenty times in the book of Isaiah. It is featured in the context of judgment (4:1; 27:8; 43:12, 28; 47:3; 54:2; 65:7). Women wanted the reproach of bareness to be removed (4:1). Israel was not to trust in Egypt because it would bring reproach (30:3, 5). King Sennacherib reproached God and was defeated by divine judgment (37:3, 4, 6, 17, 23, 24). God’s people are not to fear the reproach of man (51:7) because God has power to reproach the enemies (58:18). Before the final judgment, the reproach of the people would be removed (25:8). For Isaiah, τὸ ὄνειδος is associated with a lack of productive

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<sup>121</sup>David McKenna and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Isaiah 1-39*, The Preacher's Commentary Series 17 (Nashville: Nelson, 1993), 246.

relationship (4:1), idolatry and sin (27:8; 43:12, 28; 54:4; 65:7), railing against God (37:3-6, 17-24), and seeking support from enemies (30:3, 5).

There is an account of judgment over the whole earth (chap.24). Then, a message of salvation for all people follows: “Yahweh will prepare a feast, remove the blanket that cover the people and engulf them in death.”<sup>122</sup> The existence of sin means that our life is spotted by shame. Release from shame is a part of divine deliverance, as ὄνειδος is from a root that means “revile,” “disgrace,” or “object of disgrace or shame.”<sup>123</sup> BDAG has “loss of standing connected to disparaging speech, disgrace, reproach, insult.”<sup>124</sup> Thus, ὄνειδος is connected to sin which is a reproach to any people (Prov 14:34).

### Sin is Wiped Out

From the text of focus (LXX Isa 25:8), τὸ ὄνειδος receives the action of ἀφαιρέω which is from the Hebrew word  $\text{מָחַה}$ . As pointed out,  $\text{מָחַה}$  has affinity to the Ugaritic Phoenician, Akkadian, and Arabic sharing the same basic meaning of wipe away. Theological meaning is connected to the removal of sin/guilt or living beings from the face of the earth along with objects of idolatry from the land.<sup>125</sup> After the action of  $\text{מָחַה}$ , the item would no longer be in existence.<sup>126</sup> The manner of sin’s removal is a wiping action from God which deletes forever the reproach of the people.

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<sup>122</sup>Hendrik J. Koorevaar and Mart-Jan Paul, eds., *The Theology of the Old Testaments: The Lasting Message of the Hebrew Bible* (Zoetermeer: Publisher Book Center, 2013), 287.

<sup>123</sup>J. Schneider, “ὄνειδος,” *TDNT* 5:238–42.

<sup>124</sup>BDAG 711.

<sup>125</sup>L. Alonso-Schokel, *TDOT* 8:228, 229.

<sup>126</sup>James Swanson, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), E-book edition, s.v. “ $\text{מָחַה}$ .”

This Hebrew word, נָפַח, is translated most frequently as *exaleiphein*, and *apaleiphein*, though *aponiptein*, *aphairein*, *ektekein* and *epilanthanein*.<sup>127</sup> There are thirty-six occurrences of ἀφαιρέω in LXX Isaiah. In five cases, it relates to reformation—personal and national (1:16, 25; 6:7; 11:13; 58:9). In nineteen instances it is used in connection to judgment: On Judah (3:1, 18, 5:5, 7:17; 8:8, 9:14, 22:17, 19; 27:25; 28:18), on Assyria (7:20; 10:13,27; 14:25), on Moab (16:2), on Ethiopia (18:5; 20:) and on Egypt (20:2). Woman wanted their reproach removed; robbery is to be removed (5:8). Men want the way of truth removed (30:11) and Israel misunderstands God (40:7). The Lord is willing to remove the Messiah’s pain (53:10).<sup>128</sup> There are six cases which relate to restoration of his people (9:4), Judah (27:9), Hezekiah (38:14), and the saints (25:8).

This action of wiping away the reproach comes within the idea of the removal of what separates the saints from God (Isa 25:7) and final salvation (v. 9). The terms ἠλπίζομεν, σώσει, ὑπεμείναμεν, ἠγαλλιώμεθα, and σωτηρία seem to capture the progression of the redemptive experience ending in consummation. The saints eagerly waited for God and rejoiced exceedingly at His final salvation.

### Sin Removed before the Triumph over Death

The affirmation is given that the Lord will bring death to an end, dry every tear, and remove the reproach of the people. God’s message to Isaiah is occasioned by the threat of Assyria, Judah’s reaction, and the rebellion, meaningless ritualism, idolatry, and injustice of the people.<sup>129</sup> This message is fitting within this section of the book which

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<sup>127</sup>Alonso-Schokel, *TDOT* 8:231.

<sup>128</sup>LXX understanding of the text reveals this idea.

<sup>129</sup>Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, 235.



deals with deliverance from the dominion of Satan in the great Day of the Lord (chaps. 24-35). Within the deliverance of God's people, there is a song of praise and victory (chap. 25).

There is a song of praise to God for removing the dominion of sin and establishing his eternal kingdom (LXX Isa 25:1-5): *δοξάσω σε*—I Will glorify you. The *βουλὴν ἀρχαίαν ἀληθινήν*, the ancient and true plan of God—the plan for man's redemption is fully accomplished. Centers, cities, of oppression to God's people are ended (v. 2). This results in a burst of praise to God by those who were oppressed (v. 3). They were helped, sheltered, and rescued by God (v. 4) in a grand universal fashion (v. 6). Furthermore, death is swallowed up (v. 8). Paul used similar language when he spoke about the final triumph at Christ's second Advent: *κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νῆκος*, "death is swallowed up in victory" (1Cor 15:54: cf. v. 26). John too mentions, after the final restoration, *καὶ ἐξαλείψει ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον*, "and God will wipe away every tear" (Rev 7:17; cf. 21:4). No one who is defiled will enter (21:7).

The reproach, *τὸ ὄνειδος*, being taken away indicates that everything offensive to God is removed from the people. The righteous make a joyful shout of triumph at this final redemption (25:9). Sin which causes reproach is removed from the people before their final shout. Otherwise, they, having guilt and the burden of sin, would seek to run away from God's presence. With God's work of removal of sin, they can approach Him with joy and delight. The Lord will remove the reproach from His people before the final restoration.

### **LXX Isa 33:24: The Sin Has Been Forgiven Them**

*καὶ οὐ μὴ εἴπωσιν Κοπιῶ ὁ λαὸς ἐνοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ἀφέθη γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἡ ἁμαρτία.*

And surely the people who dwell in them shall not say, "I am weary," for the sin

has been forgiven them (LXX Isa 33:24).

This passage indicates that the people who enter the kingdom of the Messiah, after deliverance from the dominion of Satan, would have had their sins removed. No sins will be in the new Jerusalem. At the present, God’s power to heal will continue “until finally the time has come when no one will say of themselves; “I am sick” (LXX Isa 33:24; cf. Rev 22:2).”<sup>130</sup> The text has four elements: a denial—καὶ οὐ μὴ εἴπωσιν, a pronouncement—Κοπιῶ, a topic—ὁ λαὸς ἐνοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, and a prediction—ἀφέθη γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἡ ἁμαρτία. The language fits the train of thought in this unit. The condition of the people in the messianic kingdom is a promise that God will restore His people. Though the earth would be desolate (chap. 24), God would deliver His people (chaps. 25-27). He warned His people solemnly (chaps 28 and 29) and revealed the folly of relying on Egypt (chaps. 30 and 31). Then, the song of the new Earth will be raised (chap 35). The Lord’s vengeance will come (chap. 34); the King reigns in righteousness (chaps. 32 and 33).

### The Great God Removes Sin

Isaiah indicates that “my God is great”—θεός μου μέγας ἐστίν. The great God is κριτής, ἄρχων, and βασιλεὺς. All of His character display and activities are with the aim to save—σώσει, He will save (33:22). The one who would remove sin is the creator of the world (θεός, LXX Gen 1:1). He is governor and commander of the universe, the ultimate judge, and the King of kings.

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<sup>130</sup>Koorevaar and Paul, 341.

## Sin is Removed from ὁ λαός

Isaiah had started his message by revealing the sinful condition of the people: λαός πλήρης ἁμαρτιῶν (LXX Isa 1:4). He himself had experienced the removal of sin (6:7). Now, he points to hope: God wants to remove their sin before the messianic kingdom is established (33:24). This is a part of the message of comfort: λέλυται αὐτῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία, “the sin of her has been loosed” (40:2). The three times the term ἀφίημι is used with ἁμαρτία, in LXX Isaiah, they are related to action in connection to sin in people. In the first instance, sin would not be removed from those who refuse to repent (22:14). In our text, sin is removed from “ὁ λαός” before they enter the eternal kingdom (33:24). Then, the ungodly and lawless will find sin’s removal if they repent (55:7). There is a link to Zion and Jerusalem as being the people (33:20). The Lord removes the sin of His people for entrance into His kingdom and eternal fellowship with Him.

## Sin Defined: ἡ ἁμαρτία

The term ἁμαρτία, used throughout LXX Isaiah, provides contexts which tie it to certain offences against God. It is forsaking the Lord (LXX Isa 1:4) and stain to be washed away (1:18). The stain, however, is uncleanness, evil, injustice, and disobedience (vv. 16-19). The prophet used color similes to show the quandary of man’s condition and the enormity of God’s forgiveness.<sup>131</sup> Sin is connected to “Sodom” which may be rebellion and/or sexual immorality (3:9). “The sin” (5:18) involves deliberate confusion of principles and ‘self-wisdom’ (vv. 19-20). Isaiah’s sin was tied to unclean lips (6:7, 4) as is frivolity, evil rejoicing, and lack of submission to God (22:13-14). Sin is idolatry

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<sup>131</sup>John T. Willis, “Alternating (ABA’B’) Parallelism in the OT Psalms and Prophetic Literature,” in *Direction in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Elaine R. Follis, JSOT Supplement Series 40 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 63.

(27:9) and rejecting God (30:1, 9, 10). Sin seems to be specified and the saints, therefore, would have “the sin” removed.

The context of chapter thirty-three points to the particular character of the saints in opposition to a sinful life. The poor and needy in Jerusalem collected the booty of the Assyrians left by the fleeing army.<sup>132</sup> The projection beyond Isaiah’s time reveals that the saints depended on God for deliverance while trusting in Him (LXX Isa 33:2). Enemies are dealt with (vv. 3-4, 7-12) and God is praised (vv. 5-6). The saints reside with the “king” (vv. 15-17). “In all matters and at all times God’s “forgiven sinners” must do no less than despise and reject “the gain of oppressions” and ... have nothing to do with “bloodshed” and all forms of evil.”<sup>133</sup> The metaphor, “πορεύομαι,” indicates their living in “δικαιοσύνη” (v. 15).

#### Sin Removed by Final Atonement

The term ἀφίημι is used five times in Isaiah (LXX 22:4, 14; 32:14; 33:24; 55:7). In three places, it is used with sin or its synonym, and is translated from three different Hebrew words. The sin of sensuality would not be forgiven (from כָּפַר, Isa 22:14). God’s people repudiated repentance to the Lord. Therefore, their sin could not be pardoned. He could not deliver the people “while they persisted in perversity.”<sup>134</sup> However, God promises abundant pardon for the repentant (Isa 55:7). Within the Messianic invitation, the call is to respond to the offer of life (vv. 1-6). The term ἀφίημι has connection to the

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<sup>132</sup>McKenna and Ogilvie, 317.

<sup>133</sup>S. H. Widyapranawa, *The Lord Is Savior: Faith in National Crisis: A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 1-39*, International theological commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 208.

<sup>134</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 191.

provision made possible by atonement (LXX Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6; 19:22). It is linked to  $\text{רָפָּא}$  as what is not provided for  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$  by refusal to repent (LXX Isa 22:14). There is the possibility of final atonement for the people before they entered the promise land where no sickness is.

### Sin Removed before Entering the Kingdom

Against the background of calamitous events in the two preceding chapters, LXX Isa 32:1-8 paints a portrait of the Messianic age when justice reigns and lives are transformed.<sup>135</sup> Those who live in the restoration would not experience weariness from sin's burden. The  $\acute{\alpha}\phi\acute{\epsilon}\theta\eta$ , the aorist passive indicative, indicates what has happened to  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$ . "The sin was forgiven them."<sup>136</sup> Therefore, having sin removed would be a requirement for entrance into the Messiah's kingdom. Before entering the Messianic kingdom, the removal of sin from the saints takes place.

### LXX Isa 43:25: Lawless Acts Wiped and Sins Forgotten

$\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\mu\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\mu\iota\ \acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\iota\phi\omega\nu\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \omicron\upsilon\ \mu\eta\eta\sigma\theta\acute{\eta}\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota.$

I am, I am the one who wipes away your lawless acts because of me, and your sins, and will not recall them (LXX Isa 43:25).

This passage identifies God as the one who removes the iniquities and sins of His people. This text falls within the sixth unit of the book of Isaiah which deals with the triumph of God's divine plan where deliverance and the deliverer are specified. (chaps. 40-53) A cogent basis for confidence in God's purposes is laid out in this sub-unit (chaps.

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<sup>135</sup>McFadyen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 126.

<sup>136</sup>Herbert W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York: American Book Company, 1920), 180.

40-47). Here in lies the message of trusting in God for His word endures forever. (chaps. 40 and 41). Then, before declaring the fall of Babylon (chap. 47), God's three servants are expounded: the Messiah (chap. 42), Israel (chap. 43:1- 44:23), and Cyrus (43:24-46:13). The compelling characterization of God as the one who removes sin comes within the discussion of Israel as His servant.

### God Removes sin

God locates His very identity in blotting out iniquities and sins.<sup>137</sup> The gracious assertion seems out of place in light of their sin. Though the people weary Him by their sin, He promise not to destroy them but to remove their sin. His action is expressed particularly as a cloud that is blotted out by the sun, similar to a debt blotted from the ledger, or a curse that is reversed. This is God's settled resolution for His sake.<sup>138</sup> The duplication of the emphatic pronoun "I" (ἐγὼ εἰμι ἐγὼ εἰμι) and the phrase "for My own sake" anchor the removal of sin exclusively in the grace of God<sup>139</sup> and in His own infinite goodness.<sup>140</sup> In fact, the participle, ὁ ἐξαλείφων, makes the removal of sin a divine attribute.<sup>141</sup> The next occurrence of the "ἐγὼ εἰμι ἐγὼ εἰμι" locates the Lord as one "who speaks righteousness and announces truth" (ἐγὼ εἰμι ἐγὼ εἰμι Κύριος ὁ λαλῶν

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<sup>137</sup>Ortlund and Hughes, *Isaiah*, 286.

<sup>138</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), Is 43:22.

<sup>139</sup>Terry R. Briley, *Isaiah*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2000-2004), 146.

<sup>140</sup>Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary: Isaiah*, electronic ed., Logos Library System (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1999), Is 43:25.

<sup>141</sup>J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993), Is 43:25.

δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀναγγέλλων ἀλήθειαν, LXX Isa 45:19)

### Sin Removed from Judah

God’s promise is not concerning the removal of sin from the earth, land, or a mountain—not a special entity attached to geography nor from the sanctuary. The text uses “τὰς ἀνομίας σου” and “τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου” (LXX Isa 43:25) to refer to “Ἰακώβ” and “Ἰσραήλ” (v. 22) whom God called “λαόν μου” (v. 21). Sin would be removed from God’s people. Those who stood before God in their ἁμαρτία and ἀδικία (v. 24) will receive not condemnation but rectification by the wiping away of their sins. It does not appear that the people’s sins had accumulated from the lack of a proper sacrificial system, as John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck stated.<sup>142</sup>

### Sin Defined: ἀνομία and ἁμαρτία

Sin appears in a combination of ἀνομία and ἁμαρτία in the text of focus and a number of other times in LXX Isaiah. The parallel construction with both words indicates a repeat of similar ideas. Therefore, the context may refer to the “sin” being discussed for both terms. “The sins” (τὰς ἁμαρτίας) and “the lawless acts” (τὰς ἀνομίας) mentioned in the first appearance of both terms together (LXX Isa 5:18), relate to disregard for God, deliberate confusion of principles, and ‘self-wisdom’ (vv. 19-20). Again, the one touch on Isaiah’s lips from the live coal signals the removal of both his ἀνομία and ἁμαρτία, his uncleanness (6:7). The ἀνομία of Jacob and his ἁμαρτία would be taken away (27:9). God’s chastisement would be the instrument of the people’s purification.<sup>143</sup> Their sin is in

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<sup>142</sup>John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1983-c1985), 1:1098.

<sup>143</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 207.

their lack of devotion and worship to God (43:22).

### Sin Removed by Repentance

The expression “ὁ ἐξαλείφων,” as a participle, has a singular usage not only in LXX Isaiah but in the entire LXX. Based on early usage where God would completely remove all living things outside of the Ark (LXX Gen 7:4, 23; 9:15), the remembrance of Amalek (LXX Exod 17:14; Duet 25:19), and the threat of Israel themselves (LXX Duet 9:14), the expression seems to link God to the action that permanently removes entities. The psalmist appears to hint at this: “τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῶν ἐξήλειψας εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος” (LXX Ps 9:6). L&N indicates that ἐξαλείφω has a figurative meaning which is “to cause something to cease by obliterating any evidence.”<sup>144</sup> Hence, Isaiah identifies the Lord as the one who causes the ἀνομία and ἁμαρτία of Israel to cease without leaving a trace of their existence or evidence (43:25). This points to His inexplicable and inexhaustible mercy.<sup>145</sup>

Even though the text (LXX Isa 43:25) or passage does not reveal the means God uses in the removal of transgressions, the context of the condemnation of the people’s sins shows that blotting out was not accomplished at the expense of justice. “The debt the transgressors incurred has been fully paid and God’s blotting out is an act of justice and mercy.” This liability was “paid by the Servant of the Lord whose vicarious sacrifice” satisfied God’s justice, thus, providing forgiveness and redemption.<sup>146</sup> This is a

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<sup>144</sup>L&N 159.

<sup>145</sup>Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox, 1995), 79.

<sup>146</sup>Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah: Vol. 3, Chapters 40-66* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 162.



forgiveness that only God can provide.<sup>147</sup> This work of “blotting out” or wiping out sins and lawless acts is “not merely a legal transaction” removing the records of wrongs done. It involves “divine forgiveness” and God’s “transforming power that eradicates sins from the life” and “transforms sinners into saints.”<sup>148</sup> In light of the psalmist deep penitential prayer, God’s people would be brought to true repentance (LXX Ps 51:3, 11). There is also confession (LXX Isa 43:26).

Interestingly, the structure of the passage in this chapter reveals that the Exodus is being recalled (ὁ διδοὺς ἐν θαλάσῃ ὁδὸν καὶ ἐν ὕδατι ἰσχυρῶ τρίβον, LXX Isa 43:16-17). There is a strong allusion to LXX Exod 14: 21, 27-28. God will do a new thing which is a miracle in the wilderness (vv. 18-19). He will display His power in redemption and revival by a refreshing. Whereas before, in the experience and rebellion of the wilderness generation, God was not honored, He will receive honor now, due to the refreshment He provides (v. 21). A new people will be formed, as was Israel after the literal Exodus. God’s servant, Israel, has failed Him (vv. 22-24). However, He proposes an enduring solution—He will blot out their sin (v. 25).

### Sin Removed in the End-Time

LXX Isaiah points out four things: the problem—guilty burden (LXX Isa 43:22-28), the remedy—God’s spiritual refreshment (44:1-5), the reason—the exclusive reality of God (44:6-20), and the outcome—universal awakening (44:21-23), according to

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<sup>147</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 777. The sins are properly dealt with that God will not call them to mind nor will He let His knowledge of them influence how He relates to the saints (pages 153, 1012).

<sup>148</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 261.

Raymond C. Ortlund and R Kent Hughes.<sup>149</sup> I think, however, that 43:25 is a part of the solution to the people's malady of sin. It is a universal message of God's intentions for the problem and gives a luxuriously compassionate promise.<sup>150</sup> He declares what He would do in the future: not the removal of sin from the land but from His people.<sup>151</sup> Throughout this section of the book, Isaiah declares "future events with such certitude as to state them as though they had already taken place."<sup>152</sup>

The promised removal of sin is for the collective people of God seen through the use of Jacob, Israel, and singular you and your (vv. 22-25). There seem to be a suggestion that the prediction of Isaiah in this chapter has had progressive fulfillment starting with restoration from exile and moving up to the Messiah.<sup>153</sup> The Messianic Servant would come on the scene of history (chap. 42) to provide hope (v. 4), be a covenant for the people (v. 6), furnish sight to the blind, and give liberation and light to the captives (v. 7). He would save from sin and provide not merely a legal transaction that wipes the record of sin of the past but a transformation that gets rid of sin from the life. In the removal of sin, God transforms sinners into saints.<sup>154</sup> God's forgiving action is said to be liberation

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<sup>149</sup>Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr and R. Kent Hughes, *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 286.

<sup>150</sup>Roy E. Gingrich, *The Book of Isaiah* (Memphis: Riverside, 1993), 52.

<sup>151</sup>John P. Lange, Philip Schaff, and Carl W. E. Nægelsbach, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah*, trans. Samuel T. Lowrie and Dunlop Moore (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2008), 472.

<sup>152</sup>Edward E. Hindson and Woodrow M. Kroll, eds., *The KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Nelson, 1997), 1370.

<sup>153</sup>Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, Baker reference library 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), Is 43:14.

<sup>154</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 261.

and redemption such that sinners become a new creation being transformed from nothingness. Thus, included in the “Gospel of Isaiah” are both forgiveness and liberation (Isa 43:25; 44:22).<sup>155</sup> The entire section from Isaiah 41 to 48 is said to give an eschatological connotation in the use of “ἐπέρχομαι” from Hebrew “יָרִיחַ” (41:4; 44:6; and 48:12).<sup>156</sup> It may not be inappropriate to assume that Isaiah 43:25 has eschatological implications. Sin is removed in the time of the end.

### **LXX Isa 44:22: Lawless Acts and Sins Blotted Out**

ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἀπήλειψα ὡς νεφέλην τὰς ἀνομίας σου, καὶ ὡς γνόφον τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου· ἐπιστράφητι πρὸς μέ, καὶ λυτρώσομαί σε.

“For look; I have blotted your lawless acts out as a cloud, and your sins as darkness. Return to me, and I will redeem you” (LXX Isa 44:22).

This text proclaims that God is the one who removes the sins and iniquities of His people. It is in a section of the book which is connected to an eschatological meaning due to the use of “ἐπέρχομαι” from Hebrew “יָרִיחַ” (LXX Isa 41:4; 44:6; and 48:12).<sup>157</sup> Joseph Lam posits that “the language of sin’s accounting ... includes both concrete metaphors based on the mechanics of writing and more abstract expressions relating to the reckoning of sin in the “mind” of God.”<sup>158</sup>

LXX Isaiah 44:22 has four basic elements: a pronouncement—ἀπήλειψα ὡς νεφέλην τὰς ἀνομίας σου, an elaboration—καὶ ὡς γνόφον τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου, a

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<sup>155</sup>Fredrick J. Gaiser, “The Gospel According to Isaiah,” *Word & World* 38/3 (2018):256.

<sup>156</sup>Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End*, 22.

<sup>157</sup>Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End*, 22.

<sup>158</sup>Joseph Lam, *Patterns of Sin in the Hebrew Bible: Metaphor, Culture, and the Making of a Religious Concept* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 90.

command—ἐπιστρέφῃτι πρὸς μέ, and a reason—καὶ λυτρώσομαι σε. The first verb (ἀπήλειψα) seems to give the divine intention, the second the requirement of human response (ἐπιστρέφῃτι), and the third the divine goal (λυτρώσομαι). God’s divine plan will triumph; His people can have confidence in Him.

### God Removes Sin from Judah

The Creator and Redeemer removes τὰς ἀνομίας σου and τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου (LXX Isa 44:22). Here, again, the terms “Ἰακὼβ” and “Ἰσραήλ” are used. The “your lawless acts” and “your sins” are referring to Jacob and Israel, the object of God’s work of sin’s removal (vv. 21, 23). He shows mercy (ἐλεέω [*eleēō*]) and redeems (λυτρόω [*lytroō*]) to His people (v. 23). The term “Ἰσραήλ” is used some ninety-five times in the book of Isaiah. It is frequently used to specify the nation of Judah (Isa 1:3; 4:2; 8:18; 31:6; 42:24). Yet, there are times when both Israel and Judah as nation groups are referred to separately (5:7).<sup>159</sup>

Within the section of the triumph of the divine plan and the sub-section of Israel as God’s servant, the declaration is made that God removes τὰς ἀνομίας σου and τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου (LXX Isa 44:22). In the previous text, we find “ἔπλασά σε παῖδά μου,” “I formed you *as* my child” (v. 21). The term ἔπλασά is from πλάσσω (Hebrew *פָּצַץ* [*yāšār*]) which means “to form, to fashion, to make, to mold.”<sup>160</sup> The term is connected to the creation of the earth and man (LXX Isa 45:18; Ps 94:5; Zech 12:1; Gen 2:7). It is also linked to God’s purpose for what he has made (Isa 44:2; cf. Jer 1:5). Finally, it is

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<sup>159</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 123.

<sup>160</sup>L&N 513.

associated to redemption (Isa 44:24). The Creator and Redeemer of man proposed to wipe out His people's lawless acts and sins. With such a One, the removal work is assured and secured.<sup>161</sup>

### Sin Defined: Lawless Acts and Sins along with Idolatry

Sin is defined in this text in a similar manner as in the previous section (see above). Additionally, the literary context reveals a development in a lengthy explanation of sin's folly up to the promise of God's removal of sin. A declaration is made "Ἐγὼ πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ μετὰ ταῦτα, πλὴν ἐμοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν θεός," "I am the first, and I am after these things; except for me there is no God" (LXX Isa 44:6). Then, Israel is called the witness that there was no other god (v. 8). A prolonged discourse ensued on the uselessness and folly of idolatry (vv. 9-20). The sin of worshipping a carved feature of creation is shown to be of grave significance. The intensity and potency of God's removal of sin is articulated next (v. 22). The deities are inoperable and futile. They set their worshippers to embarrassment because they have no awareness or perception.<sup>162</sup>

### Sin Removed: Wiping and Freedom

The term for remove in the text is ἀπαλείφω. It comes from the Hebrew word נָקַח (that was discussed above), a term that has permanency in its application. Ἀπαλείφω has overlapping meaning with ἐξάλειφω. Ἀπαλείφω is used to indicate the complete removal of all living things outside of the ark during the flood (LXX Gen 6:7). The sense of its use in 4 Kgdms 21:13 seems to be "leave behind" rather erase. However, its use in LXX

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<sup>161</sup>Man forms the useless (Isa 44:9-10; cf. Exod 32:4) but God forms the useful (Isa 44:21, 24).

<sup>162</sup>Davies and Finkelstein, *Cambridge History of Judaism*, 471.

Dan 9:24, where the Messiah's mission is specified, indicates the idea of removal (*ἀπαλεῖψαι τὰς ἀδικίας*). Similarly, its use in 3 Macc 2:19 is in the sense of remove.

From the accounting ledger and from His own mind, sin would be erased. Moshe Weinfeld sees Isaiah's declaration (LXX Isa 44:22) of the wiping out or the removal of sins and transgressions within the context of the "proclamation of freedom" which was connected to the "Amidah for Yom Kippur." The "erasure of sin," according to him, is linked with refusal to remember which is the "forgetting of sin" in Isa 43:25.<sup>163</sup> God's work of wiping out sin seems to indicate a final work since the action is connected to permanent removal. The sins are said to be not even in existence in the records of heaven after this work is complete.<sup>164</sup>

#### Sin is Removed before Final Rejoicing

John P. Lange and company hold that "return unto me" means the return from exile.<sup>165</sup> However, Edward Young insists that the act of returning from exile cannot be designated because a redemption is paid by God and thus the reference is not exile. The remark specifies "a ransom paid for deliverance from sin and guilt," the price of God's own Son. Hence, it is a command to repent by turning from the experience of sin, which

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<sup>163</sup>Moshe Weinfeld, *Normative and Sectarian Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, Library of Second Temple Studies 54 (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 228. He referenced Philo who believes that the Day of Atonement, during Second Temple times, involves freedom from sin due to "complete freedom of the soul" (p. 227). I think it is a stretch in the wrong direction to read Greek and Akkadian notions of freedom proclamation into the Day of Atonement.

<sup>164</sup>C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Sanctuary and Atonement in SDA Theology an Historical Survey," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner (Washington: Review and Herald, 1981), 521.

<sup>165</sup>Lange, Scaff, and Nægelsbach, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah*, 485.

turning rests on redemption, the blood of the Servant of the Lord.<sup>166</sup>

We notice the call for jubilant celebration in singing (LXX Isa 44:23). Many commentators, including David McKenna, Lloyd Ogilvie,<sup>167</sup> and Roy E. Gingrich,<sup>168</sup> see only a reference to ancient Israel in this passage. However, the use of “heavens” and the “lower parts of the earth” calls all the world to rejoice in God’s abundant grace.<sup>169</sup> This is a hymnic call to celebration that recognizes the solemnity and significance of the new thing which God has announced—The good news of forgiveness and redemption.<sup>170</sup> God’s action of removing sin has universal implications and constitutes a promise of future deliverance with the remitting of guilt and reconciliation.<sup>171</sup> The removal of sin is hinged on God’s motivation to accomplish His “world-saving purpose.”<sup>172</sup> Though sin, with its darkening power, makes for the sinner a doleful covering of grey, God promises to blot it out<sup>173</sup> before final jubilation.

### **LXX Mic 7:18: Removing Lawless Acts and Impiety**

Τίς θεὸς ὡσπερ σύ; ἐξαίρων ἀνομίας καὶ ὑπερβαίνων ἀσεβείας τοῖς καταλοιπίοις τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ· καὶ οὐ συνέσχεν εἰς μαρτύριον ὀργὴν αὐτοῦ, ὅτι θελητῆς ἐλέους ἐστίν.

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<sup>166</sup>Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 182.

<sup>167</sup>McKenna and Ogilvie, 86.

<sup>168</sup>Gingrich, *The Book of Isaiah*, 45.

<sup>169</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 264.

<sup>170</sup>John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, WBC 25 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 146.

<sup>171</sup>John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Isaiah*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998), Isa 44:22.

<sup>172</sup>McKenna and Ogilvie, 86.

<sup>173</sup>Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scripture: Isaiah and Jeremiah*, (Kreifels, 1904), 157.

What God is like you, removing lawless acts and overlooking the impiety of the remnant of his inheritance? And he did not hold onto his anger as a testimony, because he is one who wishes compassion (LXX Mic 7:18).

LXX Micah, like LXX Isaiah, declares the unique nature of God in the removal of iniquity and passing over ungodliness for the remnant by His compassion. The text is a part the “greatest doxology” in the OT where the compassion of God is extolled. It echoes the sentiment found elsewhere (Exod 34:6; Neh 7:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; Jonah 4:2).<sup>174</sup> Yahweh is the God of forgiving love (Mic 7:18), redeeming power (v. 19), and eternal faithfulness (v. 20).<sup>175</sup> In this regard, He is incomparable and unique.<sup>176</sup>

The book of Micah has three major divisions: the widespread corruption of the nation (1:1 to 3:12), the time of blessing of the Messiah (4:1 to 5:15), and judgment on sin and hope in repentance (6:1 to 7:20). Having laid out the displeasure of God and His threatening against Israel, Judah, their crimes, and false prophets, Micah directs attention to restoration, revival, and the Messiah’s coming and power (4:6-10; 5:1-4). After issuing God’s covenant lawsuit (6:1-5),<sup>177</sup> the requirement of genuine religion (vv. 6-8), and divine rebuke (vv. 9-16), he prayed for restoration and proclaimed the prophetic song of God’s mercy (7:18-20). The verse has five elements: a comparison—Τίς θεὸς ὡσπερ σύ, two characterizations—ἐξαίρων ἀνομίας and καὶ ὑπερβαίνων ἀσεβείας τοῖς καταλοίποις

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<sup>174</sup>Juan I. Alfaro, *Justice and Loyalty: A Commentary on the Book of Micah*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 81.

<sup>175</sup>Kenneth L. Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, The New American Commentary 20 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 133.

<sup>176</sup>Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, WBC 32 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 59.

<sup>177</sup>See Gerhard F. Hasel, “Divine Judgment,” *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001), 825.



τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ, a denial—οὐ συνέσχευεν εἰς μαρτύριον ὀργὴν αὐτοῦ, and a reason—ὅτι θελητῆς ἐλέους ἐστίν.

### The Incomparable God removes sin

The terms “Lord God” and “God” are used in LXX Mic 7:10, 17-18. The one who defies God will come to reproach (v. 10). However, His people would be shepherded by Him (v. 14). The comparison of the text—Τίς θεὸς ὡσπερ σύ, shows that God is unique in the work of removing sin (7:18). The psalmist used a similar rhetorical question to punctuate the existential reality of God who gives victory (Ps 18:31). In another place, the question is used to distinguished God as the One who did wondrous things, revealed excellent majesty, and delivered His people (76:12-16). Associated with the interrogative is an appeal for deliverance and the fact that the Mighty One cares for the weak (82:2; 112:5). Micah portrays God as the one who brought the Exodus about (Exod 15:11). He is incomparable in deliverance and redemption. Micah points to God’s performance “like the days of your exodus from Egypt” (Mic 7:15).

### Sin Removed from the Remnant

The expression “τοῖς καταλοίποις,” from κατάλοιπος (*kataloipos*) and Hebrew תּוֹרֵי־שָׁרִי, is used in the text (LXX/MT 7:18). This is an adjective, dative, plural masculine word. It is defined as “the part of a whole which remains or continues, and thus constitutes the rest of the whole—‘rest, remaining, what remains.’”<sup>178</sup> While in the context of punishment it refers to those who are also chastised by the execution of judgment (Jer 15:9; 29:4; Ezek 5:10; 25:16; Amos 1:8; 1 Chr 4:43; 2 Chr 36:20), within the context of

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<sup>178</sup>L&N 613.

the bestowal of God's favor, it designates those who call for salvation and prayer (Jer 38:7; 49:2), receive good advice and counsel (Jer 49:19; Zeph 3:13), were gathered by God (Jer 23:3; Mic 2:12), obey God (Hag 1:12), and receive His blessing (Zech 8:11-12).

The rest of the house of Israel is rebuked for injustice (LXX Mic 3:1, 9). The term, *κατάλοιπος*, is used to point to those who will return from captivity after restoration and deliverance (2:12). Micah points to those who receive God's favor in the bestowal of the final removal of sin (7:18). These would be "the sheep of [God's] inheritance," those guided by Him (7:14).

#### Sin Defined: *ἀνομία* and *ἀσεβεία*

Within this verse, the structure of *ἐξαίρων ἀνομίας* and *ὑπερβαίνων ἀσεβείας* places them in parallel to each other (LXX Mic 7:18). The term *ἀσεβεία* is used seven times in Micah. In four of these instances, *ἀσεβεία* stands in parallel to *ἁμαρτία* (1:5, 13; 3:8; 6:7). Sin is ungodliness. Also, *ἀσεβεία* is linked to ill-gotten riches (6:12). In the final occurrence, it is in parallel with *ἀνομία*. The word *ἀνομία* is translated from *חַיִּב*, *ḥāwōn*, meaning "wrongdoing with a focus of liability for the wrong incurred or guilt which is a judicial state of being liable for wrong" with the overing of a judicial sentence.<sup>179</sup> The context shows *ἀνομία* and *ἀσεβεία* to be persecution, murder, and oppression (7:2), evil thoughts (v. 3), untrustworthiness (v. 5), and dishonoring family members (v. 6). This requires redemption and reformation.

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<sup>179</sup>Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*, s.v. "חַיִּב."

## Reformation and Redemption: Sin is Removed

The term ἐξάιρω means to remove or drive away.<sup>180</sup> The first of the two occurrences of ἐξάιρω in Micah comes within the context of judgment and is translated from the Hebrew word הָרַס, *hārās*. God would remove the strongholds of Israel in His eradication of idolatry (LXX Mic 5:11). The term indicates the idea of destroying or tearing down a structure with force or violence.<sup>181</sup> It has connection to other cognate languages. Its root is found in Old South Arabic meaning “attack, tear down” and in Moabite as “destruction of a city.” Yahweh is often depicted as destroying through His judgment.<sup>182</sup>

The second instance of ἐξάιρω is with the rubric of redemption (LXX Mic 7:18). The removal of sin comes within the enumeration of God’s mercies: He pardons iniquity, passes over transgressions, does not retain anger forever, delights in steadfast love, will have compassion, will treat iniquities under foot, will cast sins in the depths of the sea, and show steadfast love.<sup>183</sup> Whether sin the remnant possesses, its removal is set in the God’s gracious act. They are placed in the depths of the sea and no longer a threat even as Pharaoh’s army perished in the Red Sea.<sup>184</sup>

Therefore, Micah’s question: “Who is a God like you?” is the note of praise for God’s mercy as he closes the prophecy. Here, again, the removal of sin will be on the

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<sup>180</sup>BDAG 344.

<sup>181</sup>Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*, s.v. “הָרַס.”

<sup>182</sup>G. Munderlein, *TDOT* 3:462.

<sup>183</sup>Alfaro, *Justice and Loyalty*, 81.

<sup>184</sup>Bruce K. Waltke, “Micah,” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 832–33.

basis of reformation, though not particularly pointed out. The judgments were to lead to spiritual revival. The removal of sin which was promised for the nation was not fully achieved. Yet, the blessing may be claimed by everyone for the Messiah has enough grace for perfect removal of sin.<sup>185</sup> The vocabulary of Micah 7:18 is used in relation to the Suffering Servant of YHWH (Isa 53): to bear (from נָשָׂא [nāsāʾ], ἀναφέρω [Isa] and ἐξάιρω [Mic], v. 12), iniquity (ἀμαρτία from ἁwōn [āwōn], vv.6, 11), transgression (ἀνομία from πᾶσά [pāsāʾ], vv. 8, 12).<sup>186</sup> There is even the term willing (from ἡpēs [hāpēs], βούλεται [Isa] and θελητής [Mic], v. 10). The various terms used for sin “has the effect of emphasizing the completeness of God’s ability to forgive all kinds of sins.”<sup>187</sup> Hence, removal of sin comes within the framework of substitutionary death and is linked also to genuine repentance (Mic 7:9).

#### Sin Removed before Entrance into Messianic Kingdom

Micah’s declaration pertains to the eschatological removal of sin. God will complete His redemptive plan. “Christians see this plan brought to perfection in Jesus of Nazareth.” Those promises made long ago are still valid today.<sup>188</sup> Micah’s message indicates the ultimate triumph of God’s Kingdom and is a “prophetic liturgy.”<sup>189</sup> Also, the last three verses in Mic 7:18-20 were read “in the synagogue in the afternoon on the

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<sup>185</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 1031.

<sup>186</sup>Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 133.

<sup>187</sup>David J. Clark and Norm Mundhenk, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Micah* (London: United Bible Societies, 1982), 260.

<sup>188</sup>Alfaro, *Justice and Loyalty*, 81.

<sup>189</sup>Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 125.

Day of Atonement.”<sup>190</sup> Is the removal of sin at the end of the ages connected to the Antitypical Day of Atonement?

Micah’s question is reminiscent of that which was asked after the Exodus: “Who is like you among the gods, O Lord?” (Exod 15:11). Here we have the “Song of Moses” where God is honored for the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The enemies of the Hebrews were defeated in the Red Sea. The oppressor’s army was drowned.<sup>191</sup> God’s freedom and liberation gave birth to a new nation with their foes forever vanquished. Micah uses the Exodus praise in his God-given message to point to another Exodus where all our sins will be hurled into the sea of forgetfulness (Micah 7:19).<sup>192</sup> Israel’s sins are poetically painted as Yahweh’s enemies whom He shall conquer.<sup>193</sup> The enemies of ἀνομία, ἀμαρτία, and ἀσεβεία that oppress God’s people are defeated in the end-time removal of sin. A triumphant chorus will be raised (Rev 15:3). Sin will be removed from the remnant through an Exodus-like redemption by the Messiah. Therefore, before they enter the heavenly Canaan and during a final phrase of messianic work, sin will be removed.

### **LXX Zeph 3:11, 15: Contemtable Acts and Injustices Removed**

ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ οὐ μὴ κατασχυνοθῆς ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων σου ὧν ἠσέβησας εἰς ἐμέ· ὅτι τότε περιελῶ ἀπὸ σοῦ τὰ φαυλίσματα τῆς ὕβρεώς σου, καὶ οὐκέτι μὴ προσθῆς τοῦ μεγαλαυχῆσαι ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου.

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<sup>190</sup>Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 133.

<sup>191</sup>James M. Boice, *The Minor Prophets: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 357.

<sup>192</sup>Lange, Scaff, and Nägelsbach, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah*, 53.

<sup>193</sup>J. M. Powis Smith, William H. Ward, and Julius A. Bewer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel* (New York: Scribner's, 1911), 154.

In that day you will not be disgraced because of all of your habits that you have sinfully committed against me, because then I will take away from you your contemptible acts of pride, and you will no longer add to boasting upon my sacred mountain.

περιεῖλεν Κύριος τὰ ἀδικήματά σου, λελύτρωταί σε ἐκ χειρὸς ἐχθρῶν σου· βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ Κύριος ἐν μέσῳ σου, οὐκ ὄψη κακὰ οὐκέτι.

The Lord has taken away your injustices; he has ransomed you from the hand of your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in the middle of you; you shall not see evil any longer (LXX Zeph 3:11, 15).

The outline of the book of Zephaniah gives its message a universal orientation.

There are six major sections discernable in the book. The text of focus falls within the final unit of promises of restoration (LXX Isa 3:9-20). There is judgement pronounced on Judah (1:1-18), appeal to seek the Lord in probationary time (2:1-3), judgement on various nations (vv. 4-15), rebuke for Jerusalem (3:1-7), judgement on all nations (3:8) before the removal of sin. The use of λαοὺς, πάντας, and ζυγὸν ἓνα speak to God's plan for the salvation of all nations (3:9). The purpose expressed (τοῦ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι πάντας Ἰτὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου) is for a particular result (τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτῷ ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἓνα). The pronouncement of v. 10 (προσδέξομαι ἐν διεσπαρμένοις μου) pushes God's redemptive plan beyond the borders of Judah.

### The Lord, The King of Israel, Removes sin

The texts mention the Lord, the king of Israel, as the one who removes the people's sin. The expression, βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ, is predominantly used for the kings who were set up over Israel such as Saul, David, and Baasha (LXX 1 Kgdms 26:20; 2 Kgdms 6:20; 3 Kgdms 15:17; 21:4, 7, 11; 2 Chr 16:1; Isa 7:1; Hos 11:1). The term is used in contexts of prayer, praise, and intercession to refer to the Lord (Pss 5:3; 43:5; 46:8; 93:3; Esth C:8). It is used also in prophetic declarations (Isa 41:21), confession and acknowledgement (Dan 4:34), and affirmation (2 Macc 1:24). Even, the Messiah is the

king, the anointed Lord (Pss. Sol. 17:35). The term king is used five times in Zephaniah but only once in reference to the Lord (1:1, 5, 8; 3:8, 15). The Lord who is King of Israel is righteous, the sin-remover, redeemer, comforter, and savior (3:8, 15-19). He is the Lord of power (2:9; 3:17; cf. Ps 83:4).

### Sin Removed from the People of Jerusalem

The texts say “I will take away from you your contemptible acts” and “The Lord has taken away your injustices” (LXX Zeph 3:11, 15). The “you” and the “your” are pointing back to whom God was addressing. The context reveals that the Lord would remove the sin of His people of Jerusalem. They are referred to as “the remnant of Israel” (v. 13). The term Israel here is a synonym for Judah.<sup>194</sup> The remnant signifies those who “reverence the name of the Lord” (v. 12) and remain after the sinners of the land are eliminated.<sup>195</sup> Usually, the remnant remains after major disaster or apostasy and, theologically, God’s people who are restored.<sup>196</sup> In Zephaniah, those who have their sin taken away are called “daughter of Zion” and “daughter of Jerusalem” (v. 14). Then, Jerusalem is equated to Zion (v. 16).

### Sin Defined: φαυλίσματα and ἀδικήμα

A part of the people’s φαυλίσματα and ἀδικήμα would be κατασχύνω (put to shame). The two occurrences of κατασχύνω in Zephaniah are in chapter three. The term

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<sup>194</sup>G. W. Wade, “Zephaniah,” in *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha*, ed. Charles Gore, Henry L. Goudge, and Alfred Guillaume (New York: Macmillan, 1942), 1:602.

<sup>195</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 1068-69.

<sup>196</sup>Peter Brown, “Remnant,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2014).

is connected to being afflicted, hurt, and dislocated by enemies (LXX Zeph 3:20). There is shame when there is defeat because the enemy has won (Ps. 21:5; 24:2). It also relates to immorality (Ruth 2:15; Hos 5:7) and not believing in God (Isa 28:14; Ser 2:10). Thus, someone can be ashamed, humiliated or disgraced.<sup>197</sup> With sin's removal, there is trust in the Lord, purity, triumph over enemies, and healing.

Their sin is tied to ἡσέβησας from ἀσεβέω (LXX Zeph 3:11) which refers to living “in an ungodly manner” or in “godlessness.”<sup>198</sup> They would have had “ἀδικία,” “μάταιος,” and “γλῶσσα δολία.” (v. 13). Injustice, vain speech, and a deceitful tongue were their previous practice. Then, “οὐκ ὄψη κακὰ οὐκέτι,” “you shall not see evil any longer” may refer to the absence of doing wrong and being oppressed because of God's presence, redemption, and renewal along with His deliverance from enemies (v. 15). The future deliverance from Babylonian captivity is cause for rejoicing (vv. 16-20). It points to deliverance from sin.

### Sin Cancelled and Lives Transformed

LXX Zephaniah 3:9-15 seems to point to how sin is removed. The term περιαιρέω is used twice (3:11, 15) and is connected to sin. It means to “take away from around something, take away, remove.”<sup>199</sup> L&N agrees with this idea and further explains it as “to cause a state to cease.”<sup>200</sup> LSJ expands the concept to “strip off,” “remove,” “make

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<sup>197</sup>L&N 309.

<sup>198</sup>Ibid., 532.

<sup>199</sup>BDAG 799.

<sup>200</sup>L&N 152.



void,” even to “strike off, and cancel an item in an account.”<sup>201</sup> The term is translated from the Hebrew סור. This word, סור, aligns to Ugaritic *b'lsr*, and a Phoenician and Punic verb taking an accusative object with the meaning “removed.” The LXX has no specific equivalent and uses more than forty different renderings including mostly *aperchestho* and *exairo*, among others.<sup>202</sup> This would point to sin being cancelled, taken away, and removed.

There are a few expressions which alludes to the manner in which sin is taken away. The particular structure of the verbs from LXX Zeph 3:11-15 possesses a hidden message. Apart from a future-focus of these verses, v. 11 begins the communication within a personal and intimate dialogue. The Lord says “I do” in order that “you can be” (περιελῶ and οὐκέτι μὴ προσθῆς). In v.12, there is a movement from the personal to the general “I do among you” that “they may be” (ὀπολείσθωμαι ἐν σοὶ and εὐλαβηθήσονται). Then, in verse 13, there is a report: “they will be.” Rejoicing is commanded (v.14) because a unique product is made—there is transformation of the people (v.15). God is the source of sin’s removal and the restoration of His people.

The term μεταστρέψω is used to indicate God’s work in the lives of the people (LXX Zeph 3:9). This denotes a change in state or condition<sup>203</sup> with emphasis on the difference in the resulting state.<sup>204</sup> God transforms, converts, and recreates. The term is used once in Zephaniah. The first instance in the LXX relates to the transformation of

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<sup>201</sup>LSJ 3012.

<sup>202</sup>L. A. Snijders, *TDOT* 10:200, 201.

<sup>203</sup>BDAG 641.

<sup>204</sup> L&N 155.

Pharaoh's and his servant's heart against the Hebrews (Exod 14:5). The Lord transformed the curse into a blessing (Duet 23:5); He transformed Saul's heart (1 Kgdms 10:9). He turned the sea into dry land (Ps.65:6). The text uses "I will change the language of the peoples" (μεταστρέψω ἐπὶ λαοὺς γλῶσσαν, LXX Zeph 3:9). This relates to the conversion of the heart since "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας τὸ στόμα λαλεῖ, LXX Matt 12:34). The act results from a radical change and points to a decisive transformation in the depths of the inner person.<sup>205</sup> More pointedly, due to the removal of sin, resulting in transformation, the ungodly habits would stop (ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων σου ὧν ἠσέβησας εἰς ἐμέ, v.11) The radical transformation meant a complete break with the old life because the Lord had completed a total cleansing.<sup>206</sup>

The complete change leads to the calling on the Lord's name (τοῦ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι πάντα τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου, LXX Zeph 3:9). This speaks to prayer, worship, and a life devoted to God. The aim of what God does is the carrying into existence of true worship. "As the realization of His creative purpose, the Creator establishes man's worship and service." Divine worship would be a part of the daily life.<sup>207</sup> Coming out of the change of heart is "so that they might serve him under one yoke" (τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτῷ ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἓνα). The denotation here is of total dedication to God, joining of His people, and sharing in His mission. The following verse seems to reveal how it would be done: "I will take in my scattered ones" (προσδέξομαι ἐν διεσπαρμένοις μου v.10). God will gather His own.

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<sup>205</sup>Mária E. Széles, *Wrath and Mercy: A Commentary on the Books of Habakkuk and Zephaniah*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 106, 107.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>207</sup>Ibid., 107.

This speaks to the success of the redemptive plan in the character of those whom God has changed. They will engage in genuine worship due to His work in their lives (οἴσουσιν θυσίας μοι, v. 10). Having a transformed heart, devoted service, and genuine worship to God in his fold (vv. 9, 10), there will be no shame (οὐ μὴ καταισχυνοθῆς, v.11).

A new life is lived to God’s honor. God is responsible for the transformation: “I will take away from you your contemptible acts of pride” (περιελῶ ἀπὸ σοῦ τὰ φαυλίσματα τῆς ὑβρεώς σου, LXX Zeph 3:11) From the Hebrew rendering, the idea is that the proud and self-sufficient are being destroyed.<sup>208</sup> Kenneth Baker declares that in the future, after the judgment, Jerusalem would no longer be put to shame because the unrepentant would be removed from her.<sup>209</sup> However, from the LXX reading, there is a humble acknowledgement of God and a sincere, authentic response to Him who wrought a change in His people (v.11).

The transforming work of God continues. “I will leave among you a people meek and lowly” (ὑπολείνομαι ἐν σοὶ λαὸν πραῦν καὶ ταπεινόν; LXX Zeph 3:12). God is reconstructing and recreating His people. They possess the characteristics of Moses and Christ.<sup>210</sup> They love and obey God wholeheartedly and care for their fellowmen dearly. They are ready to inherit the earth made new (Ps 37:11; Matt 5:5). They are beautified with salvation (Ps 149:4) and joy (Isa 29:19).

Having thus been given those qualities, “They will reverence the name of the Lord” (εὐλαβηθήσονται ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος Κυρίου, LXX Zeph 3:12). With this attitude,

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<sup>208</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 1068–1069.

<sup>209</sup>Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 490.

<sup>210</sup>See Num 12:3 and Matt 11:29.

God become a shield (Prov 24:28). One is to do this with all the soul (Sir 7:29) and is known by God (Nah 1:7). Zephaniah had issued the call to reverence God early in his book (LXX Zeph 1:7). Now, he shows how true reverence for God is attained (3:12). Added to this reverential disposition are doing right and speaking well (v. 13). The phrases: οὐ ποιήσουσιν, οὐ λαλήσουσιν, and οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆι demonstrate further the transformation of character associated with the removal of sin (v. 13). Righteousness, truth, trustworthiness, and honest characterize the new life without fear.

### Sin Removed before Final Rejoicing

The text affirms that the Lord will remove His people's contemptible acts and injustices so that they would do no evil rejoicing or see any evil. These verses point to a prophetic promise of salvation with the act of Yahweh at the center.<sup>211</sup> His recreative acts demonstrate his grace and are astonishing and extraordinary. The Lord would remove sin from His people by ransom through the Messiah when he appears.

The two denials οὐ μὴ κατασχυνθῆς and καὶ οὐκέτι μὴ προσθῆς τοῦ μεγαλαυχῆσαι come as a result of περιελῶ ἀπὸ σοῦ τὰ φαυλίσματα τῆς ὑβρεώς σου (LXX Zeph 3:11). This action, περιελῶ gives rise to λαὸν πρᾶν καὶ ταπεινὸν and εὐλαβηθήσονται ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος Κυρίου (v. 12). The three denials of v. 13 are further consequences from the περιελῶ of v. 11. The two promises of νεμήσονται and κοιτασθήσονται are also resultant of the central action of sin's removal (v. 13). The three commands are required due to the creation of a transformed people (v. 14). They look back on v. 11 and are confirmed by the repetition of similar ideas in v. 15. The two divine

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<sup>211</sup> Széles, *Wrath and Mercy*, 106.

actions (v. 15) connect to the conceptions of Micah 7:18 and even the hymnic imperatives of Zephaniah 3:14 have association to Micah's message. There is to be rejoicing because injustice is taken away and οὐκ ὄψη κακὰ οὐκέτι.

Therefore, there is a command to rejoice (LXX Zeph 3:14). The call for rejoicing is a signal that a tremendous victory has been won. The reason for the rejoicing is repeated (v. 15). These phrases, περιεἴλεν Κύριος τὰ ἀδικήματά σου and λελύτρωταί σε ἐκ χειρὸς ἐχθρῶν σου, denote the accomplishment of God's saving plans. However, from the Hebrew rendering, the idea is that the judgments resulting from Israel's sin are passed.<sup>212</sup> The judgments are said to be punishments inflicted for their sins.<sup>213</sup> The reference to enemy is a reference to Babylon.<sup>214</sup> Yet, these events were still future. With prophetic vision the events of the future are so sure to occur that they are described as already in the past.<sup>215</sup>

The removal of sin is tied to redemption—a price is paid by the Suffering Servant. There is a transaction and a transformation. One is a legal satisfaction for the debt of sin and a personal revival ensuring harmony with God. In summary, the Lord removes the sinful deeds and injustices of His people by the Messiah before the final rejoicing.

### **LXX Zech 3:4: Lawlessness Removed**

καὶ ἀπεκρίθη καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τοὺς ἐστηκότας πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ λέγων  
Γ'Αφέλετε τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ ῥυπαρὰ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν Ἴδου ἀφήρηκα  
τὰς ἀνομίας σου, καὶ ἐνδύσατε αὐτόν ποδήρη

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<sup>212</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 1068–69.

<sup>213</sup>Wade, "Zephaniah," 602.

<sup>214</sup>Lange, Scaff, and Nägelsbach, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah*, 33.

<sup>215</sup>David J. Clark and Howard Hatton, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Zephaniah*, Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 198.

And he answered and said to the ones standing before his face, saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And he said to him, “Behold I have removed your lawlessness. And clothe him with a robe (LXX Zech 3:4).

The fourth vision of Zechariah asserts, among other things, that God removes the sin of Joshua the high priest. Joshua,<sup>216</sup> with uncleanness, was standing before the Lord and the adversary was present working against him. The Lord rebuked the enemy and cleansed Joshua.

Within the theme of the great conflict between God and Satan, this vision was given. It comes within the section of the book that deals with the promise of restoration (LXX Zech 1:1-6:15). The other two sections of the book are rebuke for sin and call for righteousness (7:1-8:23) and the destruction of the enemy and deliverance for Israel (9:1-14:21). The verse for our focus has three essential elements (3:4). There is a command: Ἀφέλετε τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ ῥυπαρὰ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, a declaration: Ἴδου ἀφήρηκα τὰς ἀνομίας σου, and an elaboration: καὶ ἐνδύσατε αὐτὸν ποδήρη. The declaration appears to be based on the command and both seem to carry the same basic idea. Hence, ἀφέλετε is equal to ἀφήρηκα and τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ ῥυπαρὰ to τὰς ἀνομίας σου. There is a contrast: τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ ῥυπαρὰ with ποδήρη.

### The Lord Removes Sin

The passage stated that “the Lord said ... the Lord rebuke you...” (LXX Zech 3:2). There is a narration describing Joshua’s clothing and position (v. 3) that followed this. The “he” in “he answered” cannot be the adversary since he was resisting Joshua

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<sup>216</sup>For a description of Joshua as a real historical figure, see comments on Zechariah 3 in Fred H. Hartman, *Zechariah: Israel's Messenger of the Messiah's Triumph* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1994).

from receiving favor (v. 1). The “he” seems to be linked to the one who spoke in v. 2. This would be the one who rebuked the adversary and gave the order to “Remove the filthy garment from him”—Joshua (v. 4). The Lord removes his lawlessness (v. 4). He was the same who unveiled the divine vision to Zechariah concerning the redemptive plans for Joshua (v. 1). He chose Jerusalem and took her out of the fire (v. 2). The expression “Κύριος Παντοκράτωρ” signals the one who has functional and legitimate authority over the universe and for the cleansing of His people (v. 10).

### Sin Removed from Joshua

Joshua was clothed in “filthy garments” (Zech 3:3), a command was given to remove them (v. 4), and the command was obeyed (v. 5). Joshua is called the great priest from “τὸν ἱερέα τὸν μέγαν” (LXX Zech 3:1). Joshua, a common name in Second Temple period, was the son of Jehozadek and worked with Zerubbabel in rebuilding the temple after returning to Jerusalem (Ezra 2:2; 3:2, 8, 9; Neh 7:7; 12:1). He was called high priest (Hag 1:1; Zech 3:8; 6:11).<sup>217</sup> He was the worship leader and possibly the second highest leader in Judah. The mention of Jerusalem forms the impression that Joshua is used to represent it (v. 2). If this is the case, then sin is removed from God’s people—Jerusalem. He is said to represent Israel.<sup>218</sup>

### Sin Defined: Filthy Garments and Lawlessness

Filthy garments and lawlessness are connected to the term ἁμαρτία which appears thrice in the book (LXX Zech 3:3, 4, 5). Clothing is used at times as a symbol of the

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<sup>217</sup>Paul L. Redditt, “Jeshua,” *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 701.

<sup>218</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 1092.

condition of the inner being. Mordecai put on sackcloth and cried to signal the urgency of addressing Haman’s deadly plot (Esth 4:1-3). Esther put on garments of distress and pleaded with God (Esth C:13 cf. 1 Macc 2:14; 11:71). God clothed the saints with “Garments of Salvation” (61:10). Jerusalem is commanded to put on “Garments of your glory” because of God’s favor (Pss. Sol. 11:8).

The filthy Garments are a symbol of a sinful life. These mean dirty, foul-odored, and excrement-covered. The high priest was in a tragic condition in this lamentable picture.<sup>219</sup> Joshua is to be clothed in proper attire (Exod 28) and represent the people before God. His unclean condition is a picture of the people.<sup>220</sup> In fact, the filthy Garments represent the sin and uncleanness of the nation of Israel.<sup>221</sup> God is dealing with the sins of Israel which is offensive to Him and their removal is pointed out in the vision.<sup>222</sup> It is parallel to τὰς ἀνομίας. There are two places where ἀνομία appears in LXX Zech 3:4 and 5:8. In the latter case, ἡ ἀνομία is related to ἡ ἀδικία. Therefore, the garment represents unrighteousness and is a sign of the vilest defilement.<sup>223</sup> This is an exceptionally graphic expression for describing the garments of the high priest.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>219</sup>Hartman, *Zechariah*, n.p., Zechariah3.

<sup>220</sup>G. Michael Butterworth, “Zechariah,” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 869.

<sup>221</sup>Hartman, *Zechariah*, comments on Zechariah 3.

<sup>222</sup>Edward Dennett, *Zechariah the Prophet* (Galaxie Software, 2004), 30.

<sup>223</sup>Eugene H. Merrill, *An Exegetical Commentary - Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; Minor Prophets Exegetical Commentary Series: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Biblical Studies, 2003), 120.

<sup>224</sup>Carroll Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope: A Commentary on the Books of Haggai and Zechariah*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 77.



## Sin Removed: New Character

There are three occurrences of ἀφαιρέω in LXX Zechariah. Two are found in 3:4 and one in 10:11. In the latter case, God would remove Assyria's pride and restore His people (ἀφαιρεθήσεται πᾶσα ὕβρις Ἀσσυρίων). Here, ἀφαιρέω, in the future passive indicative, is translated from the Hebrew word נָרַד, *yārād*, which may have the idea of to be brought down, where victory is gained over another.<sup>225</sup> The first occurrence of ἀφαιρέω (LXX Zech 3:4) is from the Hebrew word סָרַח, while the second is from עָבַר. God takes away “filthy garment” and “lawlessness.” This action is associated with permanent removal of an entity. God, by His wiping action, deletes the sin of Joshua who represents the people of Jerusalem.

Joshua was “standing before the presence of the angel of the Lord” (LXX Zech 3:1). Then, there is mention of “the ones standing before his presence” (v. 4). The scene may point to the work which occurs on man's behalf in the heavenly sanctuary. Daniel's vision indicates that one “like a Son of mankind” went before the Ancient of Days with unnumbered attendees (Dan 7:10, 13). The Lord and the angel of the Lord (LXX Zech 3:1-4) are the ones who have responsibility to effect the removal of sin from His people. Others may work with Him in the work but He is always the one to say, “I have removed your lawlessness” (v. 4). The removal of the filthy garments indicates the removal of sin and restoration to God's favor, while the clean robe denotes the imputed righteousness of Christ.<sup>226</sup> What follows the removal of sin includes godly living and moral rectitude

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<sup>225</sup>Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*, s.v. “נָרַד.”

<sup>226</sup>Nichol, *SDABC*, 1093.

(LXX Zech 3:7).<sup>227</sup> This points to the concept that sin's removal involves revival and reformation of life—giving of a new character patterned after His righteousness.

### Sin Removed within Cosmic Conflict

In the visionary experience, the text does not specify a time when the sin of Joshua is removed. The idea of the great controversy and the standing in the presence of the Lord seem to reveal a heavenly judgment scene linking the event to an eschatological framework. The visionary temporal context indicates a conflict between the Lord—Κύριος and the Adversary—ὁ διάβολος (LXX Zech 1:1). The adversary, of Israel or mankind,<sup>228</sup> seems to be indicating that Joshua, thus clothed, belongs to God's disfavor—destruction.<sup>229</sup> Yet, God does not dispute the facts presented. Rather, He transforms Joshua's character in order to make the adversary's facts obsolete. The statement “The Lord rebuke you, O adversary” (Ἐπιτιμήσαι Κύριος ἐν σοί, διάβωλε) set aside the accusations of Satan.<sup>230</sup> The word “rebuke” generally suggests a strong action. This struggle between good and evil takes the drama to a cosmic level in relation to the future of Israel.<sup>231</sup> There is nothing that troubles the soul more when divinely awakened to feel its sin than a sense of its guilt and its consequent unfitness to stand before God.<sup>232</sup>

In summary, Zechariah sees Joshua, the representative of Israel, possessing filthy

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<sup>227</sup>Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, 77.

<sup>228</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>229</sup>This is a superhuman adversary: 1 Chr 21:1 and Job 1-2.

<sup>230</sup>Butterworth, “Zechariah,” in *New Bible Commentary*, 869.

<sup>231</sup>Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, 77.

<sup>232</sup>Dennett, *Zechariah the Prophet*, 30.

garments and sins. Satan accuses him but the Lord rebukes Satan. The Lord then cause the sinful clothing to be removed in the time of the accusation.

### **LXX Daniel 9:24: Finish Sin and Erase Unrighteousness**

ἑβδομήκοντα ἑβδομάδες ἐκρίθησαν ἐπὶ λαόν σου καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν Σιών  
συντελεσθῆναι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὰς ἀδικίας σπανίσει καὶ ἀπαλεῖψαι τὰς ἀδικίας,  
καὶ διανοηθῆναι τὸ ὄραμα καὶ δοθῆναι δικαιοσύνην αἰώνιον καὶ συντελεσθῆναι  
τὰ ὀράματα καὶ προφήτην, καὶ εὐφρᾶναι ἅγιον ἁγίων.

“Seventy weeks have been determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, for sin to be ended, and to seal up transgressions, and to blot out iniquities, and to make atonement for iniquities, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and the prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy” (LXX Dan 9:24).<sup>233</sup>

Perceptively, Daniel is admired both in the Talmud and Midrash, studied intently by Jewish scholars, and was venerated by the Qumran sect. Philosophers, psychologists, and scientists have paid close attention to his exhilarating book. It has tremendously inspired poets and artists. Jews, Christians, and non-religionists have been powerfully drawn to its content.<sup>234</sup> Josephus regarded him as “one of the greatest of the prophets” because “he did not only prophesy of future events ... but ... determined the time of their accomplishment.”<sup>235</sup>

William H. Shea posits that in Daniel 9, the coming of the Messiah is the prime focus with His sacrifice which provides atonement and everlasting righteousness.<sup>236</sup>

Doukhan sees the historical context of Daniel 9 as the first year of Darius, 538 to 537

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<sup>233</sup>Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*, Da 9:24.

<sup>234</sup>Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom & Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Nampa: Pacific Press, 2000), Prologue.

<sup>235</sup>Flavius Josephus, *Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. by William Whiston (Galaxie Software, 2002), *Ant* 10.11. 7.

<sup>236</sup>William H. Shea, “History and Eschatology in the Book of Daniel,” *JATS* 8, No. 1–2 (1997): 202.

BC.<sup>237</sup> He believes the problem of exegeting this chapter arise from the difficulty of the text along with the multiplicity of interpretations of it.<sup>238</sup> He holds that the passage's density, the singular vocabulary, and the intricate syntax give rise to this difficulty. The 70 weeks, he further explains, should be interpreted in relation to history in a realistic manner because Daniel did so with the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy. Additionally, the 70 weeks has a theological dimension in terms of a jubilee just as Jeremiah's prophecy has a connection to the sabbatical year.<sup>239</sup>

The time is specified that He would come on a universal mission. The entire passage (Dan 9:24-27), elaborates the mission of the Messiah revealing His coming (v. 24), His death (v. 26), His covenant (v. 27), and His sanctuary (v. 24).

#### The Messiah Removes Sin from God's People

The use of the term *māšīaḥ* in Daniel distinguishes him as having a unique quality.<sup>240</sup> Lim and Collins articulate that in Dan 9:25 and 26 there is an exception to the usage of the term. There is no qualifier such as the Lord's anointed, his anointed, nor the anointed priest.<sup>241</sup> By virtue of His death, covenant, and the inauguration of the "holy of holies," the Messiah would remove sin from "the many"—the greatest number possible and "Zion" (9:27, 24). The vision in Daniel 9 concerns people in terms of their atonement

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<sup>237</sup>Doukhan, "The Seventy Weeks of Dan 9," 6.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid., 2, 8.

<sup>240</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>241</sup>Lim and Collins, *The Oxford Handbook*, 418.

and salvation and concerns Jerusalem in terms of its construction and rebuilding.<sup>242</sup>

Those who were concerned for returning to the promised land and be restored would have the root of their problem taken away—sin which caused exile and punishment.

#### Sin Defined: τὴν ἁμαρτίαν and τὰς ἀδικίας

In LXX Dan 9:24, the term “συντελέω” occurs twice. The first is in the phrase “συντελεσθῆναι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν,” a translation of the Hebrew “עָשָׂה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה,” “to complete the transgression,” “to complete the guilt,” (LES) or “to finish the transgression” (NKJV). The term “συντελεσθῆναι” is aorist passive infinitive with “τὴν ἁμαρτίαν” as the accusative. This action to “complete” or “finish” the “transgression” is a part of the mission of the Messiah. During the seventy weeks important events would occur, among which is the completion, finishing or ending of sin. Doukhan, in commenting on the Hebrew of “τὴν ἁμαρτίαν,” comprehends the context of Dan 9:24-27 as in an “indefinite sense” (v. 24) whereas the concept is utilized “in a definite and particular sense” in the previous verses (vv. 5, 8, 11, 15).<sup>243</sup>

Often, a combination of terms is used to indicate the totality of what God wipes out for His people. In 1QH<sup>a</sup> 4:24, we find “to remove iniquity and sin and to atone for transgression and unfaithfulness.”<sup>244</sup> Emanuel Tov examines the use of the LXX against the MT and believes it is very difficult sometimes to know which term was translated from the Hebrew into the LXX. He mentions a combination of terms for sin: ἡμάρτομεν,

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<sup>242</sup>Doukhan, “The Seventy Weeks of Dan 9,” 9.

<sup>243</sup>Jacques B. Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), 141.

<sup>244</sup>Eileen M. Schuller and Carol A. Newsom, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of 1QH<sup>a</sup>*, Early Judaism and Its Literature 36 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 17.

ἠσεβήσαμεν, and ἠδικήσαμεν which may relate to ונאשׁת, ונינו, and ונעשר (Bar 2:12).<sup>245</sup>

Daniel used a list to show the total error of Israel leading up to the exile: “ἡμάρτομεν, ἠδικήσαμεν, ἠσεβήσαμεν, καὶ ἀπέστημεν καὶ παρέβημεν,” They had sinned, behaved unjustly, acted impiously, turned away, and transgressed (Dan 9:5). This is elsewhere (ἀφαιρῶν ἀνομίας καὶ ἀδικίας καὶ ἁμαρτίας, LXX Exod 34:7). Sin, in the conglomerate expression, is the full sum of offending a holy God.

### Sin Removed: Messiah’s Death, Covenant, and Ministry

Roberto Ouro sees Daniel 8 to 9 as a part of the theological center of the OT because it encapsulates the message of the sanctuary with the sacrificial system which points to the Messiah who was to die as a sacrifice.<sup>246</sup> This profound prophecy zooms in on one of the most crucial events in the history of the world—the sacrificial/substitutionary death of the Messiah. The various terms used in this passage captures the essence of the occasion.

Doukhan declares that “to finish the transgression” is in parallel with “to bring in everlasting righteousness” and “to atone for iniquity” is in parallel with anointing the holy of holies.<sup>247</sup> This would seem indicate that a mediatorial operation would be set up for sin’s removal. Ferdinand O. Regalado conveys that there is a literary progression in how the Messiah would deal with sin in the seventy years; transgression would stop,

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<sup>245</sup>Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, 3rd Ed., Completely Revised and Expanded (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 80.

<sup>246</sup>Roberto Ouro, “The Sanctuary: The Canonical Key of OT Theology,” *AUSS* 50, No. 2 (2012):176. He also declares that Isa 52:13-53:12 is among those texts.

<sup>247</sup>Doukhan, “The Seventy Weeks of Dan 9,” 11.

sealed and completely forgiven (9:24).<sup>248</sup>

The Messiah's work in dealing with sin comes within a particular frame of reference. Dan 9:24 is said to make a correlation of specific themes from Exod 29:36-37 of "atonement, anointing, and Most Holy." From the framework of Exod 29, Dan 9 ties the atoning death of the Messiah to the ordination of the High Priest. This ordination is linked to the institution of the burnt offering.<sup>249</sup> The use of "ἀπαλειψαι," to make reconciliation or atonement, implies priestly work (LXX Dan 9:24).

Additionally, to finish transgression "συντελεσθῆναι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν" (LXX Dan 9:24) is linked to "ἀποσταθήσεται χρίσμα" the cutting off of the Messiah which is His death, a death equivalent to the second death.<sup>250</sup> This term "ἀποσταθήσεται" is directly interrelated to the Hebrew "כרת" (כָּרַת; *kārāt*) meaning "cut off."<sup>251</sup> The Greek word here, in the future passive indicative, suggests that the action was done to the Messiah resulting in His death. By virtue of this death, the end of sacrifice and offering occurred. Shea discloses that they ended in a "religious, spiritual, and theological sense." He states that although the Temple continued until A.D. 70, the sacrifices offered there had no significance.<sup>252</sup> Christ's death fulfills the Passover (1 Cor 5:7) which was the feast that begins the Jewish year and suggests the beginning events (covenant, sacrifice, anointing of Priest and Sanctuary) in the Hebrew system are fulfilled in AD 31, not the Day of

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<sup>248</sup>Ferdinand O. Regalado, "Progressions in the Book of Daniel," *JATS*, 20:1-2 (2009):63.

<sup>249</sup>Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End*, 37.

<sup>250</sup>Roy Gane, *Altar Call* (Berrien Springs, MI: Diadem, 1999), 173.

<sup>251</sup>*The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. "ἀφίστημι."

<sup>252</sup>William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1 (Silver Springs, MD: Biblical Research Institute General Conference of SDA, 1992), 157.

Atonement at the end of the sacrificial year and whose timing is found in Dan 8:14.

The ministry of the Messiah in dealing with sin also has affinity to the covenant, *διαθήκη*. “The covenant” was “made strong for many,” “*δυναστεύσει ἡ διαθήκη εἰς πολλούς*” (LXX Dan 9:27). The fixing of the sin problem comes within a covenant inaugurated by the Messiah. Doukhan contends that He is identified with the sacrifice of the covenant and His death made the covenant possible and assure divine forgiveness.<sup>253</sup> Covenant holds a significant place throughout the OT and was the theological rallying point for the prophets.<sup>254</sup> As soon as God secured to Himself a special people, He administrated over them by His written word, commandments, and covenant.<sup>255</sup> However, devastation was suffered by Judah for breaking the covenant (9:7, 11, 13). Therefore, the Messiah was predicted to come to secure God’s people and set things right.

Furthermore, the “*ἀπαλεῖψαι τὰς ἀδικίας*”—to wipe out unrighteousness involves “*εὐφραῖναι ἅγιον ἁγίων*”: to anoint the Most Holy (LXX Dan 9:24). The term is used for various items connected with the sanctuary and sacrifice.<sup>256</sup> In Daniel 9:24, the context and use suggest that it points to the sanctuary for ministry. There is an inauguration of the

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<sup>253</sup>Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End*, 148.

<sup>254</sup>This is seen in 1 Kgs 19:10; Neh 1:5; Isa 24:5; Jer 11:2-10; Ezek 16:8; Hos 6:7; 8:1; Hag 2:5; Mal 2:4-5.

<sup>255</sup>Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), Exod 24:1-8.

<sup>256</sup>The altar of burnt sacrifice was “*ἅγιον τοῦ ἁγίου*” (LXX Exod 29:37; 40:10); the altar of incense: “*ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων*” (30:10); other vessels and furniture in the sanctuary were “*ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων*” (30:29); the holy perfume (30:36; *ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων*); specified meat offerings (LXX Lev. 2:3, 10; 6:17; 10:12; *ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων*); trespass offerings (Lev. 6:31, 36; *ἅγια ἁγίων*); the shewbread (Lev. 24:5-9; *ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων*); devoted things (Lev. 27:28; *ἅγιον ἁγίων*); the holy district (LXX Num. 18:10; Eze. 43:12; *ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων*); and the most holy place of the sanctuary (LXX Exod 26:33, 34; *τοῦ ἁγίου τῶν ἁγίων*).



heavenly sanctuary by the Messiah. The Temple in heaven went into a new phase of operation when Christ ascended to heaven at His ascension.

This dedication of the heavenly Sanctuary took place after Christ ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit on the believers.<sup>257</sup> Within the heavenly Sanctuary, He is fulfilling “His priestly ministry by virtue of His earthly sacrifice.”<sup>258</sup> This specific use of “συντελεσθῆναι” with “τὴν ἁμαρτίαν” as direct object comes within a context that reveals related aspects of the Messiah’s work which includes the timing of His appearance (LXX Dan 9:25), his death—cut off (v. 26), the bringing of the sacrificial system to an end (v. 27), the making of the strong covenant (v. 24), complete atonement for sin (v. 24), and the dedication of the heavenly sanctuary for His High Priestly work (vv. 24-25).<sup>259</sup> The close of Daniel’s prophecy in chapter 9 is marked by important events.<sup>260</sup> With these linguistic ties, the phrase ἀπαλεῖψαι τὰς ἀδικίας points to the work of the Messiah in erasing unrighteousness. As part of God’s special work in the eschatological removal of sin, the Messiah would undertake this unique task. Certainly, the atonement for sin made by the Messiah would bring moral purity.<sup>261</sup>

### Sin Removed after Seventy Weeks

The attempts to decode the Messiah’s timing has produced many perspectives.

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<sup>257</sup>See Acts 1:9-11; 2:1-6; Heb 1:3; 8:1-2; 9:12, 24.

<sup>258</sup>Alberto R. Treiyer, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment: From the Pentateuch to Revelation* (Siloam Springs, AR: Creation Enterprises International, 1992) 382.

<sup>259</sup>Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, 158.

<sup>260</sup>Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End*, 151. Salvation’s message went to the world, the Holy Spirit was poured out” on Jews and Gentiles, and Paul was converted and commissioned to preach the Gospel.

<sup>261</sup>Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 41.

Though Nickelsburg, in discussing Daniel 9, indicates that the “precise meaning of this chronology is obscure,”<sup>262</sup> the angelic interpreter told Daniel that he had come to “impart understanding” to him (v. 22). Weinfeld declares that Second Temple authors looked for the end after seventy sabbatical years at which point there would be a jubilee release.<sup>263</sup> Grabbe sees the seventy weeks of years as a re-interpretation of Jeremiah’s prophecy (25:11-12; 29:10). He thinks Christians have seen the prophecy as a calculation of the coming of the Messiah.<sup>264</sup> Doukhan indicates that there are various positions: a symbolic interpretation of Dan 9: 24-27 which connects to Cyrus and the second Advent of Christ and a dispensational interpretation relating to phases in salvation history from Artaxerxes to Christ in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem or His baptism, and the last week is connected to the end of time. There is a historical critical interpretation relating to Antiochus Epiphanes from the fall of Jerusalem to the re-dedication of the temple. Then, finally, he speaks of a historical-Messianic interpretation relating to the seventh year of Artaxerxes to the baptism of Christ, His crucifixion, and the stoning of Stephen.<sup>265</sup>

Regalado posits that Gabriel’s word, in Dan 9, point to a new period decreed by God that would be much longer than the seventy years of the exile.<sup>266</sup> The starting point

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<sup>262</sup>Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 80. He thinks an author in Antiochus’ time was referring to the condition of the temple. However, he did not made connections to the previous, used key terms from both chapters, nor related to it as a time prophecy with specific details.

<sup>263</sup>Weinfeld, *Normative and Sectarian Judaism*, 229.

<sup>264</sup>Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism*, 101-2. He thinks that the time refers to Onias III in 170 BC preceding the revolt of the Maccabeans. Here, he did not made connections to the previous chapter, used key terms from both chapters, nor related all the specific details of the time prophecy.

<sup>265</sup>Doukhan, “The Seventy Weeks of Dan 9,” 2.

<sup>266</sup>Regalado, “Progressions in the Book of Daniel,” 63.

of the seventy weeks of years is given: “from the going forth of the command for the answer and for the building of Jerusalem until Christ the prince *there shall be* seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks....<sup>267</sup> This command came in the seventh year of the Persian King Artaxerxes in 457 BC.<sup>268</sup> From this date, there would be 69 weeks or 483 years (7 x 69) to Messiah. Taking 457 from 483 gives 26; there is an adjustment to an additional year since there are no zero year. This takes the date for the Messiah’s appearance to AD 27.

Christ was baptized in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, which was exactly AD 27 (3:1-22). The dove descended on Him in the messianic affirmation. The “anointed prince” would be removed or put away (ἀποσταθήσεται χρίσμα; v. 26). The Greek ἀποσταθήσεται is translated from the Hebrew תִּקַּץ which means “be cut off.” This happened in the midst of the last week where he would make strong the covenant for many (δυναστεύσει ἢ διαθήκη; v. 27). This death of the Messiah, in the midst of the week, caused “offering and drink-offering” to “be taken away” (ἀρθήσεται ἡ θυσία καὶ ἡ σπονδή). Three and a half years after AD 27, He died in AD 31.<sup>269</sup> The holy of holies—the heavenly sanctuary was also consecrated for His High Priestly ministry.

### **Psalms of Solomon 17:25, 33**

καθάρισον Ἱερουσαλήμ ἀπὸ ἐθνῶν καταπατούντων ἐν ἀπωλείᾳ,  
ἐν σοφίᾳ, ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ

Cleanse Jerusalem from the nations that trample it in destruction,

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<sup>267</sup>Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*, Dan 9:25.

<sup>268</sup>See Paul Z. Gregor, *Life and Visions of Daniel* (Manchester, Jamaica: Northern Caribbean University Press, 2005), 147–49; Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 142-52; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1981), 1:205-226.

<sup>269</sup>See Luke 3:1-3, 21-22; Nichol, *SDABC*, 5:714.

to expel sinners from the inheritance in wisdom, in righteousness (Pss. Sol. 17:25).

καὶ καθαριεῖ Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐν ἁγιασμῷ, ὡς καὶ τὸ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς,

And he will cleanse Jerusalem with sanctification, as also from the beginning (Pss. Sol. 17:33).

The texts reveal a supplication for God to cleanse Jerusalem from enemy forces or sinners who works for its destruction. This prayer is a part of a document, *Psalms of Solomon*, dated to the first century BC. These are eighteen psalms found in eleven Greek and four Syriac MSS.<sup>270</sup> It is believed to have been translated from Hebrew or Aramaic.<sup>271</sup> It is referred to as a literature of crisis. The author was impacted personally by the inundation of grave events along with misfortune. Therefore, he had “deep theological misgivings.”<sup>272</sup> The gentiles took over his land and brought new forms worship and strange social practices which had a corrupting influence.<sup>273</sup> The dominance of paganism, the oppression of hostile heathens, and the ruin of their city stirred the psalmist to hope for the Messiah who would bring deliverance for Israel.<sup>274</sup> In Pss. Sol. 17, there is a lengthy messianic song outlining the rule of the longed-for king, the “anointed son of David.”<sup>275</sup> This pseudepigraphic text forms a part of the “rich exegetical

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<sup>270</sup>James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 639.

<sup>271</sup>William J. Deane, *Pseudepigrapha: An Account of Certain Apocryphal Sacred Writings of the Jews and Early Christians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1891), 35.

<sup>272</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 643.

<sup>273</sup>*Ibid.*, 639.

<sup>274</sup>Deane, *Pseudepigrapha*, 42.

<sup>275</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 639.

tradition of early Judaism” where it gives “glimpses of contemporary history” and breathes “Messianic hopes.”<sup>276</sup>

### The Messiah Removes Sin and Sinners

As Grabbe discusses revolutionary Judaism in the Second Temple times, he mentions that messianism depicts the idea of a Messiah who rules on earth.<sup>277</sup> This concept seems to be precisely what is shown in Pss. Sol. 17. The one who would cleanse Jerusalem is described as their king, “a son of David” (17:23). If “υἱὸν Δαυΐδ” is a literal translation from Hebrew, then it would be in construct and be translated as definite as David is a proper noun. Then it would really be—“The son of David.” He would be a righteous king, taught by God, and their king, “the anointed Lord” (χριστὸς κύριος; vv. 35-36). He rules in justice and would glorify God (v. 32). He would possess divine strength (v. 24) and operate in wisdom and righteousness while carrying out his executive and universal functions (vv. 25, 31). The effective energy that brought the world into being would be his because the lawless nations would disintegrate into oblivion by the word of his mouth. He seems to know the hidden things of the heart (Pss. Sol. 17:27). Though a human, the son of David, he would possess divine attributes as the “anointed Lord.” He is one who has God’s kingship over Israel and imbued with spiritual power and holiness to be “invincible in action and perfect in judgment.”<sup>278</sup> This certainly does

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<sup>276</sup>James H. Charlesworth and Craig Evans, eds., *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplemental Series 14, Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 25, 26.

<sup>277</sup>Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism*, 81.

<sup>278</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 645-46.

not appear to be a defective view of the Messiah.<sup>279</sup>

### Jerusalem Cleansed

The expressions “cleanse Jerusalem from the nations that trample it in destruction” and “he will cleanse Jerusalem with sanctification” signify the dismissal and separation of a people from another (Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33). The nations are to be driven out of Jerusalem which means that sinners are expelled (v. 25). Gentiles run away (v. 27). No one delighting in evil will dwell there (v. 29). There are specific references to God’s people in terms of what would happen to them. God’s reign would be exercised over them (v. 23). A holy people are to be gathered and sanctified; Jerusalem is to be cleansed with sanctification (vv. 28, 33). The language seems to indicate that while sinners and the lawless would be destroyed from Jerusalem, God’s people would be made holy.

### Sin Defined: Living Contrary to God

Our texts and the passage in which they stand have a few noteworthy phrases pointing to the persons to be removed. The “ἄρχοντας ἀδίκους”<sup>280</sup> will be shattered (Pss. Sol. 17:24). The unrighteous or unjust rulers would have led the effort to trample Jerusalem to destruction (v. 25). They are defined as the “violators of the law” who would also gather unlawful gain and operate dishonestly.<sup>281</sup> The next term is “ἁμαρτωλοῦς” meaning sinners (v. 25; cf. vv. 26, 27). They live contrary to the will of God and are filled with pride and haughtiness. Injustice and wickedness are practiced by

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<sup>279</sup>Deane, *Pseudepigrapha*, 47.

<sup>280</sup>The term ἄδικος is used in Pss. Sol. 4:12; 9:5; 12:6; 15:6. One of the ideas is that fire and wrath are reserved for the unjust.

<sup>281</sup>G. Schrenk, “ἄδικος,” *TDNT* 1:149–63.

them. The “foreigners and strangers” seem to be the Gentiles who would run from Jerusalem when the Messiah comes (vv. 31, 27). They are not joined God nor His covenant.

### Sinners Expelled and Israel Sanctified

Having the threat of Israel’s destruction before him, the psalmist pleads with God and recourse to the resolution of the “messianic kingdom of the last days.”<sup>282</sup> He had expressed his hopes elsewhere before this point. The saints would justify God’s judgment when He “removes sinners from the face of the righteous one” (Pss. Sol. 4:9). Is this righteous one the Messiah? Then, God’s guidance would be with His people “in the time of your help” where Israel finds mercy “for the day you promised them” (7:9). Furthermore, he entreated the for “the Lord’s salvation” for “Israel his servant forever” that the saints inherit the promises. However, he desired that the “sinners be destroyed from the face of the Lord” (12:7-8). This particular idea is expressed in the following way:

A “Sinners will perish ... forever”  
B “Those who fear the Lord will be shown mercy”  
B’ “They will live in the mercy of their God”  
A’ “Sinners will perish from eternal time” (15:13-15).

Similarly, he continues his supplication: “may God cleanse Israel for the day of mercy with blessing, for the day of election when he brings up his anointed one” (18:6). A special blessing would be on the Saints who experience the good things of the Lord on

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<sup>282</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 644.

that day (v. 7). The anointed of the Lord would be the instrument to remove predators of his people with the rod (v. 8).

The term καθαρίζω is used to indicate how cleansing is done. It means to “heal a person of a disease” or to make a person clean or acceptable.<sup>283</sup> Another idea of καθαρίζω is to make atonement or to make good.<sup>284</sup> The term may signify an action to bring physical, religious, and moral cleanness in order to achieve the result of being free from stains, shame, and adulteration. Purification open access to God.<sup>285</sup> A life given over to injustice, pride, destroying God’s people, disdain for God’s law, and outright and faithfulness to God’s covenant would constitute pollution that needs cleansing.

The appeal to the Lord to cleanse Jerusalem is first mentioned with respect to the deleterious activities of foreign nations (Pss. Sol. 17:25). The second is related to sanctification. In the former instance sinners are obliterated along with unjust rulers (vv. 24, 26). The lawless nations are destroyed eliminating injustice and wickedness (vv. 27, 29). Non-covenanters are extinguished (v. 31). This makes the land clean. Concurrently, the Messiah rules over Israel (v. 23), gathers a holy people, leading them in righteousness, judges the sanctified people (v. 28), and knows them—they are sons of God (v. 30). There is a universal gathering of the people under the messiah (vv. 32, 34). Israel would be cleansed, both the land and the people (18:6).

### Sinners Removed in the End Time

The individual eschatological hope expresses that of the nation. This eschaton is

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<sup>283</sup>L&N 268.

<sup>284</sup>*The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, s.v. “καθαρίζω.”

<sup>285</sup>F. Hauck, *TDNT* 3:423–31.



viewed as shortly to come in order to bring an end to misery and maltreatment.<sup>286</sup> The exact time for the Messiah to come is in the mind of God—the proper time in God’s will (Pss. Sol. 17:23). It is a day of mercy for Israel. The time when God would cleanse Jerusalem would occur in the coming generation (18:6-8). The imminent intervention of God in the Messianic kingdom would bring an end to sin by destroying all sinners and the gathering of all the saints.

### **1 En. 10:20: Make the Earth Clean**

καὶ σὺ καθάρισον τὴν γῆν ἀπὸ πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας καὶ ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας καὶ ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας καὶ ἀσεβείας, καὶ πάσας τὰς ἀκαθαρσίας τὰς γινομένας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐξάλειψον.

“And you, make the earth clean from all uncleanness and from all wrongdoing and from all sins, ungodliness and uncleanness that is upon the earth. Wipe it away (1 En. 10:20).

This passage in 1 En. outlines an instruction to remove all unrighteousness from the earth. It is found in numerous MSS<sup>287</sup> and covers many theological themes. The most prominent are the heavenly messiah and the eschatological concept derived therefrom. The book opens with a declaration of the conclusive, imminent judgement for the destruction of the wicked and then the resurrection of the righteous to sinless eternal life.<sup>288</sup> The book of 1 Enoch is referred to, by Nickelsburg, as an example of a Jewish text with a complete apocalyptic worldview. This is seen from the juxtaposition of the “present time of evil with primordial time of angelic rebellion and the future time of

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<sup>286</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 644.

<sup>287</sup>Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, xvii.

<sup>288</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 9.

adjudication” down to its apocalyptic mix of numerous “traditions, themes, and literary forms.”<sup>289</sup>

The book begins with pronouncing blessings for the righteous who would be saved and retribution for the wicked who would be removed (1 En. 1:1). The idea of the removal of sin is achieved through the destruction of the wicked. After giving encouragement to look for the better future life, God is said to be coming (1:2-3). The effects of His coming are described (vv. 4-7). There will be total destruction for all on the earth, except for the righteous who will be preserved (v. 8). God ordered four angels, Uriel, Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael to destroy the wicked and clean the earth of sin. Thus, sin is removed by the destruction of sinners. In terms of time, the text does not specify a date. However, this is referred as an eschatological punishment.<sup>290</sup>

Before final judgment (1 En. 10:20), in 10:2, the declaration is made, “The end is coming” (τέλος ἐπερχόμενον) and “that the whole earth is destroyed” (ὅτι ἡ γῆ ἀπόλλυται πᾶσα). There is to be a universal destruction of the earth. Speaking of Azael, the sentence is made, “in the day of judgement he will be lead in the burning” (ἀπαχθήσεται εἰς τὸν ἐνπυρισμόν, vv. 4-6). Gabriel was commanded to destroy the sons of fornication (ἀπόλεσον, v. 9). Michael states that all the spirits of the frauds and the sons of the watchmen were to be destroyed (ἀπόλεσον πάντα τὰ πνεύματα τῶν κιβδήλων καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἐγρηγόρων, v. 15). The statement in v. 16, “destroy all wrong doing from the earth” (ἀπόλεσον τὴν ἀδικίαν πᾶσαν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς), is similar to ἐξάλειψον (v. 20) because this is achieved by destroying the wicked.

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<sup>289</sup>Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 52-53.

<sup>290</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.

In 1 En. 10:20, the term ἐξάλειψον is used as a summary term. After commanding to clean the earth of all uncleanness, wrongdoing, sins, and ungodliness, the verse ends with that term: “wipe it clean.” This action is not one to purify or remove sin from the life of a person. Rather, it is the expression of the destruction of evil men from the earth. The result of such destruction is the purity of the earth of uncleanness, wrongdoing, sins, and ungodliness. Also, καὶ οὐκέτι πέμψω ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος, “I will never send it upon them again unto all the generations of the ages” (v. 22), shows a sense of finality. The removal of sin is the destruction of the wicked in the final execution of judgement.

### **Wisdom of Solomon 5:13: Consumed in Evil**

οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς γεννηθέντες ἐξελίπομεν, καὶ ἀρετῆς μὲν σημεῖον οὐδὲν ἔσχομεν δεῖξαι, ἐν δὲ τῇ κακίᾳ ἡμῶν κατεδαπανήθημεν.

In this way also we who were born came to an end, and indeed, we have no sign of virtue to show, but we were consumed in our evil.” (Wis 5:13).

The text mentions that those without a life of virtue are destroyed in the final judgement of the unrighteous. Within the book called *The Book of Wisdom* in the Vulgate and *The Great Wisdom of Solomon* in the Syriac, the text falls in the first section outlining Solomon’s exhortation to seek after wisdom. Also, the fate of the unrighteousness and the eternal reward of the saints are outlined.<sup>291</sup> The book was written during the era when a style of Jewish writing emerged where the authors, having a message for their contemporaries, “put it forth under the aegis of a great name.” Here, the

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<sup>291</sup>Charles Harris, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” in *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha*, ed. Charles Gore, Henry L. Goudge, and Alfred Guillaume (New York: Macmillan, 1942), 2:71.

author assumes the person of the great king of Israel.<sup>292</sup> However, the work is said to possess an anti-Egyptian sentiment of Alexandrian Judaism.<sup>293</sup>

The dominant idea seen in the passage leading up to the statement of Wis 5:13 is the response of the lost. The passage is introduced with the righteous having great favor (5:1). The lost responded in great horror (v. 2) The speech of the lost runs from v. 3 to v. 13. The lost identify the righteous as the ones they had mocked (v. 3). They asked a few questions relating to the righteous and then about their lost condition. “How was he counted among the sons of God and his share is among the saints?” (v. 5). “What had arrogance gained us? And what has wealth with boastfulness benefited us?” (v. 8).

The statement about themselves reveals a shocking acknowledgment. “We fools,” (οἱ ἄφρονες, Wis 5:4), “misled” (ἐπλανήθημεν, v. 6), and “filled in the ways of lawlessness” (ἀνομίας ἐνεπλήσθημεν τρίβοις, v. 7) are indeed descriptive of a sorrowful loss. They explained their end (v. 13) as a path which is immediately gone after it is being made (vv. 9-12). This path taken produced no commendable or godly qualities (v.13). They concluded their speech with their faith: “we were consumed in our evil” (ἐν δὲ τῇ κακίᾳ ἡμῶν κατεδαπανήθημεν, v. 13). Charles Harris believes that the phrase “come to an end” points to spiritual death.<sup>294</sup> However, v. 14 confirms the destruction of the lost. The text (v. 13) does not speak of the removing of sin from the life of a person but the destruction of the lost.

Therefore, sinners are being destroyed. In Wis 5:15, the righteous are said to live

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<sup>292</sup>Deane, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1.

<sup>293</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 432.

<sup>294</sup>Harris, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” 73.

forever and have their reward in the Lord. This may suggest that the Lord is the one who removes sin by destroying the sinners from the earth. Thus, by destroying them, these would be gone: pride, arrogance, folly, error, lawlessness, and evil ways (vv. 4, 6-8).

### **1QS 9:4 Removing Iniquity and Sin**

4 עולם לכפר על אשמת פשע ומעל חטאת ולרצון לארץ מבשר עולות ומחלבי זבח ותרומת

eternal, in order to atone for the guilt of iniquity and for the unfaithfulness of sin, and for approval for the earth, without the flesh of burnt offerings and without the fats of sacrifice - the offering of (1QS 9:4)

This text states that atonement for transgression and sin is made without animal sacrifices. The Community Rule, 1QS was among the first scrolls to be found at Khirbet Qumran in 1947.<sup>295</sup> Mohammed Khalil was among Bedouin Shepherd in the northwest area of the Dead Sea when he threw a stone in a cave. His brother Muhammed El-Muhammed checked inside the cave where he found ten jars, one of which contains scrolls. These were the first seven scrolls found including the Community Rule.<sup>296</sup> Four scrolls were sold to Athanasius Samuel including 1QS—the Community Rule.<sup>297</sup> This document was written for the leaders of the Essene community outlining rituals, data on the spirit of truth and error, ordering the community, entrance in the community, discipline, punishment, and duties of the leaders.<sup>298</sup>

The Qumran community believed that the “impending manifestation of God’s

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<sup>295</sup>Sidnie W. Crawford, *Scribes and Scrolls at Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 118.

<sup>296</sup>James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 4.

<sup>297</sup>Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 26.

<sup>298</sup>Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 97.

triumph over evil and darkness in the end of days had already begun.”<sup>299</sup> Their hopes were tied to the coming age where they would receive Israel’s inheritance in a new world.<sup>300</sup> The faithful would be purified so that no evil would be in them (1QS 4:20-25). They awaited the glory of Adam which would be obtained at the “time of the determined end” (καιροῦ συντελείας).<sup>301</sup> The disobedient would not dwell in the land when the Messiah of Aaron and Israel should come at the end of days (CD 23:20).<sup>302</sup> According to Eyal Regev, the major aim of the Qumran community was atonement. He cites “You purify them from their offences by the greatness of your goodness” (1QHa 15:29-31) and “And God will atone for them, and they shall see His salvation” (CD 20:27-34) in establishing his view.<sup>303</sup>

The passage in which the text appears outlines what discipline is to be applied to one who errs unwittingly as against one who errs willfully (1QS 9:1-2). Verse three forms the basis for the statement in verse four. Harmonious consent and living are said to be sweetness and an acceptable offering (v. 5). The men of the community are said to be forming a “house of holiness” (בית קודש, v. 6). The governing authority resides in the sons of Aaron (v. 7). The possession of the community must not be mixed with that of the “men of deceit” (אנשי הרמיה, v. 8) because they are unclean (v. 9).

The word כפר is used (1QS 9:4) to point to the action that deals with פשע and

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<sup>299</sup>Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 3.

<sup>300</sup>Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 82.

<sup>301</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>302</sup>Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scroll*, 144.

<sup>303</sup>Eyal Regev, *Sectarianism in Qumran: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 75.

חטאת. “The guilt of iniquity” and the “unfaithfulness of sin” are atoned for without animal sacrifices (v.4). The principles of purity and justice that are practiced by “the Community of Holiness” are said to “atone” for iniquity and sin. Therefore, the removal of sin in the end time living of the Qumran community is achieved by the ordering of the community according to right precepts. The timing is at the “end of days” in which they were living and as long as the community operates as a “holy house” for Aaron.

### **1QS 11:3 Iniquity Removed by God’s Righteousness**

3 ובצדקותו ימה פשעי כיא ממקור דעתו פתח אורי ובנפלאותיו הביטה עיני

and with his just acts he cancels my iniquities. For from the source of his knowledge he has disclosed his light, and my eyes have observed his wonders, and the light of my heart the mystery of 4 existence. (1QS 11:3)

The text points out that God removes the transgression of the community by His righteousness and that God reveals light from His knowledge. The passage displays a poetic and Psalm-like style. In verses 1 and 2a, the discourse is aimed at leading the one who is in the wrong to get in the right. The positives of understanding an instruction are to lead to meekness and a broken spirit. The author discusses his way of life (vv. 2b-7a). Then, in verses 7b and 8, he speaks of the righteous and resorts to statements about himself in verse nine onwards.

He affirms that his judgement, the perfection of his ways, and the uprightness of his heart belong to God (1QS 11:2b). His use of the phrase “by his righteousness, he removes transgression” reveals what God has done to his sin. Here, “and with His just acts He cancels my iniquity” attributes to God the work of the removal of his sin. This could be what God does for the community (the Community Rule/1QS was written for the ordering of community life), then the previous instance (1QS 9:3) could be referring to God removing sin when the community seeks to be in harmony with righteous

principles. He highlights the reward of the righteous as everlasting possession, inheritance, and future ages (1QS 11:7b to 9). He then refers to himself as having failings, iniquities, sins, and “belonging” to the assemblies of worms (vv. 9, 10). Yet, he mentions that if he stumbles or falls into sin, God’s mercies would be his salvation (v. 12) and God would draw him in His mercies and kindness (v. 13). The idea of a relationship with God, repentance and humiliation, is discerned by these references. Thus, transformation of character is alluded to. In summary, God will remove His servant’s iniquities with His just acts.

### 1QS 11:14, 15: Sins Removed because of God’s Goodness

14 משפטי בצדקת אמתו שפטני וברוב טובו יכפר בעד כול עוונותי ובצדקתו יטהרני מגד  
15 אנוש וחטאת בני אדם להודות לאל צדקו ולעליון תפארתו ברוך אתה אלי הפותח לדעה

my judgment; he will judge me in the justice of his truth, and in his plentiful goodness always atone for all my sins; in his justice he will cleanse me from the uncleanness of 15 the human being and from the sin of the sons of man, so that I can give God thanks for his justice and The Highest for his majesty. (1QS 11:14, 15).

Following from the passage above, these texts (1QS 11:14, 15) assert that God would atone for all His servant’s sins in His abundant goodness. The author identifies himself as having failings, iniquities, and sins (v.9). However, he mentions that if he falls into sin or stumbles, God’s mercies would attend to him (v.13). To this he adds, “in his plentiful goodness [He] always atone for all my sins” (יכפר בעד כול עוונותי, v.14). The following seems to be similar: “in His justice He will cleanse me from the uncleanness of the human being and from the sins of the son of man” (ובצדקתו יטהרני מגדת ) (אנוש וחטאת בני אדם). The term יכפר is a *Pi’el yiqtol* in the third person masculine singular. This aligns to יטהר, *Qal yiqtol* third masculine singular. Both actions are done by God to remove עוונותי and cleanse נדת and חטאת (vv.14, 15). The blend of mercy and justice leads



to the removal of sin. Resulting from this action, the cleansed “can give God thanks for His justice and The Highest for His majesty” (להודות לאל צדקו ולעליון תפארתו ברוך אתה אלי), v.15). God removes the sin of the supplicant by His great mercy.

#### 4Q393 2:5: Iniquities Removed and New Spirit Created

5 פניך מחט[אינו וכו']ל עונותינו מחה ורוח חדשה

Our God, hide 5 your face from [our] si[ns, and] wipe out [al]l our iniquities. And create a new spirit 6 in us (4Q393 2:5).

This fragment, which has a number of the initial verses missing, shows a supplicant requesting that God removes all the community’s sins. 4Q393 embodies the confession of the community and its plea for God’s favor through the removal of sin. God is addressed as “our God” (v.4). Request is made that He hides his face from their sins (vv. 4, 5). This echoes the plea of David “Hide your face from my sins” (הַסְתֵּר פְּנֵיךָ) (מִחַטָּאֵי)<sup>304</sup> or ἀπόστροφον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν μου (LXX Ps 51:9). Following this, the request continues: “and wipe out all our iniquities” (אינו וכו']ל עונותינו) (מחַה, v. 5). This alludes to David’s song (וְכָל-עֲוֹנוֹתַי מְחָה) (Ps 51:11 [51:9]). The term מחַה is used for the action to take away sin. Its usage is often associated with permanent results from its actions.

The concept of transformation or revival accompany the request for sin’s removal. “And create a new spirit in us” (ורוח חדשה ברא בנו) is attached to that for sin’s removal. Again, the Psalm of David’s great repentance is alluded to (רוּחַ נְכוֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי) [BHS], καὶ πνεῦμα εὐθὲς ἐνκαίνισον ἐν τοῖς ἐγκάτοις μου, LXX Ps 51:12 [51:10]). The removal of

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<sup>304</sup>A. Schenker, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: SESB Version.*, electronic ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2003), Ps 51:11.

sin is to go along with a recreation that comes from the core of the inner-being. Additionally, request is made to “establish in us a faithful inclination” ( וכוונן בקרבנו יצר ) (אמונות, 4Q393 2:6). A disposition that bends toward righteousness is in view. The use of “broken spirit” (נשברה) takes the matter into the realm of genuine repentance before God (v. 7). Seen in this passage is a request to God to remove the iniquities of the community by transformation “in the end of days.”

### CD 14:19: The Messiah Removes Sin

12 [המשפטים אשר יש]פטו בם עד ממוד (מעמוד) משיח  
אהרון וישראל 13 [ויכפר עוונם ממנ]חה וחטת

“[of the regulations by which they shall be ruled until the rise of the messiah of Aaron and Israel. [And their iniquity will be atoned through meal] and sin-offerings” (4QD<sup>a</sup> 1:12, 13).

“until there arises the messiah] of Aaron and Israel. He shall atone for their sins [... pardon, and guilt]” (CD 14:19).

Both texts seem to point to the coming of the Messiah who would atone for the Community’s sins. The texts have portions which were missing. Certainly, this creates the need to use other similar materials to identify the missing verses. Of course, the context is relied on to provide possibilities. The statement “Without the flesh of burnt offerings and without the fats of sacrifice” (מבשר עולות ומחלבי זבה, 1QS 9:4) for the atoning of sins suggests that the translation in CD 14:19 may be a more accurate understanding.

The text of 4QD<sup>a</sup> is greatly reconstructed. The priests or Levite worker should be between thirty and fifty years old. He should be a language expert with abilities in human psychology (vv. 1-3). He will order the operations in the assembly and administer justice (vv. 4, 5). He works with the judges who collect charity funds and distribute same (vv. 6-9). Discussion ensued on the precepts to be followed until the Messiah arrives (vv. 10-

12). He is called the Messiah of Aaron and Israel. Many see this as indicating the possibility that the Qumran believers were expecting two Messiahs rather than a single one.<sup>305</sup> The iniquities of the community are said to be atoned for after His appearance (v. 13).

The sequence of events is similar in CD 14:7-19. However, CD 14:7-19 provides additional information which points to the value of the covenant in the community (14:2). Members of the community are to be enlisted in their proper order and seated in similar fashion (14:3-6). The regulations are to be followed until the Messiah comes. Jewish belief in the expected Messiah was fairly strong. The Targum of Isa 52:13 reads: “Behold, my servant, the Messiah.”<sup>306</sup> The Targum Jonathon has “הָא יצִלָּה עֲבָדֵי מְשִׁיחָא.”<sup>307</sup> In our text, the Messiah is assigned the task of the removal of the sins of the community. Though how he would accomplish such removal was not mentioned, link from Isaiah may suggest a substitutionary death.

#### **4Q215a 2:3: All Iniquity Removed**

3 וצרת מצוק ונסוי שחת ויצרופו במ לבחירי צדק וימה [כו] ל פשע

and the dread of hardship, and the trial of the pit.  
And they will refine by them the chosen of justice and he will wipe out [al]l  
Iniquity (4Q215a 2:3 [4QTime of Righteousness]).

The text declares that the chosen will be refined by the time of trial and their iniquity will be wiped out. The Messiah to come is referred to as a kingly figure: “עד בוא”

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<sup>305</sup>Flint, *The Bible at Qumran*, 112.

<sup>306</sup>Robert H. Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2004), 2:39.

<sup>307</sup>Stephen A. Kaufman, ed., *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2005; 2005), Is 52:13.

משיח הצדק צמח,” “The Messiah of Righteousness, The branch of David” (4Q252] 4Qcomm Gen A] 5:3, 4). At His coming the meek will be spared but the wicked will be delivered to the sword (CD-B [Damascus Document b] 19:10-11). Those who betray the “new covenant” (19:34-35) were not to be added back to the community even until the coming of the Messiah (20:1). The community is to faithfully follow the regulations “until the prophet comes and the Messiah of Aaron and Israel” ( עד בוא נביא ומשיחי אהרון ) (וישראל, 1QS 9:10,11).

Though the operations of the community, according to the rules, would atone for iniquities (1QS 9:4), the Messiah would come and atone for their iniquities (4Q215a 2:3). Before the removal of their sins, there would be “hardship and trials of the pit” (v.3). These will serve to refine the chosen. Then the Messiah’s action comes into play. He wipes out all iniquities of His saints. What follows this removal of sin is the declaration that the time of righteousness has come. The expressions that follow the removal of sin indicate a closure of one period and the opening of another. These include: “For the age of wickedness is fulfilled” (כיא שלם קץ הרשע) (v.5) and “the age of peace has arrived” ( בא קץ השלום ). There will be praises to God “Every tongue will bless him” (כול ל[שון] תברכנו) (vv. 7, 8). There is a finality of the addressing of the sin problem. In summary, the Messiah is said to be coming to remove all iniquities from the Qumran community before the age of peace begins.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the Second Temple literary background to the concept that Christ, in the NT, came to remove sin at the end of the ages (Heb 9:26). The central concern has been to ascertain how sin would be taken away at the end of the ages in Second Temple literature. In line with this specific aim, effort was made to identify who would remove sin, from where it would be removed, how sin is defined, and removed, and what time indications were involved.

I have reviewed pertinent literature of authors who wrote on how sin would be dealt with within an eschatological setting in the Second Temple period. These authors seem to reveal three basic frameworks in which sin was handled. These I have rebranded as legal, kingly, priestly, Theo-anthropic models, with a combination framework also. There was one which could be referred to as a pneuma-anthropological model.

Within a sin-punishment-repentance-salvation context, a debt to be cleared, and moral purity to be obtained through punishment, a legal model of how sin is dealt with was identified. Here, there were slight variations such as sin-salvation, sin-exile-return, etc. The text which these authors examined includes 1 En., Pseudo-Philo, T. Ab., T. Mos., T. 12 Patr., and Jub. The second views the treatment of sin by the destruction of the wicked through a process of judgment. Here, the sin is not removed from the sinner but rather the sinner is destroyed. I see this as a kingly or kingly messianic model where a kingdom is set up to destroy sin or the messiah is sent as the agent for sin's removal. The texts examined by scholars includes 1 En., Jub., the Bible as a whole, 4QPseudo-Daniel<sup>a</sup>, 1QpHab, 4QpPs<sup>a</sup>, 4QpNah, 4Q88, and 4QTime of Righteousness. The third view was an

eschatological purification which involves a final work of removing sin from the saints. I assign this view to a priestly or priestly messianic model. Here, ideas such as stains being removed in order to attain to moral purity, moral purity attained through atonement, and the final atonement and purification are deliberated. Texts explored include Dan 9, 1QH<sup>a</sup>, and other Qumran files. Davies and Finkelstein's idea, from their discussion of Sir and Jdt, seems to fit a Theo-anthropic model.

There was a combination framework seen which includes a king-Theo-anthropic concept from Hultgren's view on Qumran documents. Then, there was a king-priest-Theo-anthropic view from Flusser's assessment. Also, there were a legal-Theo-anthropic view from Wise's interpretation, and a legal-priest-king model where there is justification and purification of the saints by God, along with the destruction of the wicked and sin from Hultgren's position (his mention of the work of the Holy Spirit seems to point to a link from the priestly to a pneuma-anthropological model). Finally, the king-priest model is seen in Grabbe's, Nickelsburg, and Flusser's expositions from Pss. Sol., 1QSa, and 1QS respectively.

In reflection on these frameworks, the concern would be on whether they are interrelated or mutually exclusive. We could argue that the destruction of the wicked and the final purification of the saints fall within the pattern of sin-punishment-repentance-salvation, specifically in the areas of punishment and repentance-salvation respectively. Whereas those who reject God's offer of mercy are destroyed, those who accept God's grace move into repentance. Here, they would be able to receive final salvation. Repentance and salvation seem to be where the eschatological purification fits conceptually and existentially. Those who are hardened against God in the phase of

punishment are destroyed, while those who receive God's gracious deliverance are purified and saved.

God would enact the punishment, the exile, the return, and the salvation of His people. He Himself would destroy the lost or assign agents to do so. He would do the final cleansing work in the lives of the saints also. Israel was to be faithful to the covenant, live in purity, in perfection of way, and grow in true wisdom. The Messiah was identified as having the characteristics of God and was an eschatological personage. He was the "anointed Lord" to make atonement for final removal of sin and liberate Jerusalem in a priest-king function.

Angels are commanded to destroy the wicked in order to remove sin. Yet, the dominant position in the passages of Second Temple texts examined was that God and the Messiah remove sin in a legal, kingly, or priestly model. In LXX Deuteronomy, the Sovereign and living God cleanses the land of His people. In LXX Isaiah, the Lord God, the great God who is Creator and Redeemer takes away sin (LXX Isa 25:8; 33:24; 43:25; 44:22). LXX Micah states that the incomparable God of might, majesty, redemption, and deliverance puts away sin (7:18). For LXX Zephaniah, the Lord of power, the King of Israel, who redeems, comforts, and saves, removes sin (3:11, 15). Zechariah mentions that the Lord who rebuked the adversary, chose Jerusalem, and deliver her, gets rid of sin (3:4). The Messiah, the anointed Lord, cleanses Jerusalem (Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33). It is implied in Wis 5:13 that the Lord who rewards the righteous destroys the lost to remove sin. In 1QS 9:4; 11:3, 14-15, though the community members of holiness are said to atone for sin, the God of justice and abundant goodness is identified as removing sin. In LXX Dan 9:24-27, it is the exceptional Messiah, in CD 14:19, it is the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, and in 4Q215<sup>a</sup> 2:3, it is the priestly Messiah who wipes out sin.

Mention is made that the removal of sin is in the destruction of the lost from the earth (LXX Deut 32:43; Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33; 1 En. 10:20; Wis 5:13). At the same time, the idea is seen that the sin of the people of Judah, called Zion, “the remnant,” Jacob, Israel, or “the many,” is taken away (LXX Isa 25:8; 33:24; 43:25; 44:22; Mic 7:18; Zeph 3:11, 15). God called Judah “my people” (LXX Isa). They are the restored and delivered remnant (LXX Mic 7:18) and the “daughter of Jerusalem” and “remnant of Israel” (LXX Zeph 3:11, 15). Joshua represents Judah. The Qumran believers, the saints, called the “house of holiness,” have their sins removed (1QS 9:4; 11:3, 14-15; 4Q393 2:5; CD 14:19; 4Q215<sup>a</sup> 2:3).

Sin is defined as reproach or disgrace, ill-gotten gain, idolatry, lack of harmony with God, lack of devotion, lawlessness, and ungodliness (LXX Isa 25:8; 33:24; 43:25; 44:22). The sins of idolatry and murder are eliminated, one through retributive justice on “the enemies” and the other by purifying His people (LXX Deut 32:43). Sin is described as lawlessness and ungodliness expressed as evil thoughts, unfaithfulness, and dishonor to family (LXX Mic 7:18). It is characterized as contemptible acts and unrighteousness seen in ungodly living, vain speech, and lying lips (LXX Zeph 3:11, 15). Sin is classified as filthy garments representing lawlessness, uncleanness, and unrighteousness (LXX Zech 3:4). It is the totality of evil in offending a holy God (LXX Dan 24). A life that is contrary to God will come to a cataclysmic end (Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33). Sin is uncleanness, injustice, and ungodliness (1 En. 10:20). It is evil (κακία; Wis 5:13). In Qumran texts, sin is guilt, unfaithfulness, iniquities, uncleanness, stumbling, and errors.

Sin was removed by God wiping it away from existence—the people’s lives, His mind, and record, by final atonement in connection with repentance and the proclamation of freedom (LXX Isa 25:8; 33:24; 43:25; 44:22). The idea of atonement/cleansing of His



people seems to be present in both LXX Deut 32:43 and Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33. God removes sin by destroying it as a stronghold and totally taking it away from the people in forgiveness and in connection to the Suffering Servant (LXX Mic 7:18). Sin is also cancelled from the life in association with a radical transformation and regeneration of the people (LXX Zeph 3:11, 15). There is the creation of a new character signified as a change of a soiled garment (LXX Zech 3:4). Through the Messiah's death and covenant, it is put away from the people in a mediatorial work in the Most Holy (LXX Dan). It is removed through the destruction of sinners (Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33; 1 En. 10:20; and Wis 5:13). It is wiped away in atonement with links to creating a new spirit and a faithful inclination (1QS; 4Q393; CD; 4Q215<sup>a</sup>).

The time indications of when sin would be removed have not been found to be particularly specific. However, the basic time-frame is within the perceived end-time and before final entrance to the eternal kingdom of God. This would be in the "end of days" where a call for final and universal celebration for God's vindication of Himself and His people is given (LXX Deut 32:43). Before the final triumph over death, before final entrance into the everlasting messianic kingdom, and before final universal rejoicing by the saints, sin is removed (LXX Isa 25:8; 33:24; 43:25; 44:22). The timing of sin's removal in a messianic work precedes the final Exodus-like deliverance of God's people (LXX Mic 7:18). This is before the final rejoicing by the saints for their final redemption (LXX Zeph 3:11, 15). A heavenly judgment scene occurs within the removal of sin at the end of the ages (LXX Zech 3:4). After seventy weeks or 490 years, sin would be removed by the Messiah within His heavenly ministry after His death and the setting up of a strong covenant (LXX Dan 9:24). To the end of this heavenly ministry, there will be a

proclamation of freedom, a Day of Atonement session, because the sin of the saints is totally removed.

Both 1 Enoch and Wisdom of Solomon place the removal of sin in the time of final destruction of the sinners themselves. The time is said to be near future but according to God's schedule (Pss. Sol. 17:25, 33) In the faithful practice of the Qumran community as a holy house, sin is removed in the "end of days" that they were living in. However, they looked forward to the final eradication of sin from the saints by the Messiah who would perform the final atonement and then destroy the wicked. This final removal occurs after a time of severe trial and before the "time of righteousness" and the era of peace set in (1QS; 4Q393; CD; 4Q215<sup>a</sup>). The dominant model of sin's removal is within a priest-king framework as final cleansing of the saints occur and final destruction of the wicked takes place.

As one considers the interpretation of the NT concept of Christ appearing at the end of the ages to remove sin (Heb 9:26), these considerations seem appropriate to be made. The idea of how a covenant and heavenly sanctuary ministry are set in place to deal with sin should be explored. That the "messianic personage" has ushered in at the "end-time" evokes many of the sources we have considered. Death in a substitutionary manner is also of value in expounding the process in how sin(s) is dealt with evokes many of the processes we have identified in the sources. This thesis has reemphasized the importance of the literary context for any who would seek to read Heb 9:26 in a manner respectful of its biblical-theological context.

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