


The Apocalyptic Character of the *Testament of Moses*

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ABSTRACT: The document entitled *Testament of Moses* takes the form of a farewell speech inspired by the Book of Deuteronomy, addressed by Moses before his death to Joshua. The original document, dating from the time of the Maccabees (mid-2nd century BC), was rewritten and updated at the beginning of the first century AD. It is preserved in only one Latin manuscript from the sixth century. The Latin text is a translation from Greek (ca. 5th century) which in turn is a translation of a text that was probably written in Hebrew. Although the *Testament of Moses* is dominated by a Deuteronomistic theology of history, its message focuses on determinism of an apocalyptic nature. Hence, the existing apocalyptic elements in the document play an important role, which is particularly highlighted by the eschatological hymn in Chapter 10, which shows many parallels with Dan 12:1–3. The eschatological events are portrayed as the time of the establishment of the kingdom of God and the annihilation of the devil. Before this happens, however, a variety of cataclysms of cosmic proportions and an intervention by God will occur, resulting in the final defeat of the forces of evil and the exaltation of Israel and its inclusion in a community with heavenly beings.

KEYWORDS: *Testament of Moses*, apocalyptic literature, eschatology

The document which is now called the *Testament of Moses* (formerly the *Assumption of Moses*) is preserved in only one Latin manuscript dating from the 6th century BC. The fragmentary manuscript – with a damaged beginning and the final part not preserved – was found in the Ambrosian Library in Milan by Antonio Maria Ceriani and published in 1861.¹ The document, widely regarded as lost until its discovery, was known only from quotations by ancient writers, including Gelasius of Cyzicus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Didymos of Alexandria and Pseudo-Athanasius.

¹ A.M. Ceriani, “Fragmenta Assumptionis Mosis,” *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim Bibliothecae Ambrosianae* (ed. A.M. Ceriani) (Mediolani: Typis et impensis Bibliothecae Ambrosianae 1861) I.1, 9–13 [introduction] and 55–64 [Latin text]. Ceriani identified the document as *Assumptio Mosis* based on the account of Gelasius of Cyzicus, a fifth-century ecclesiastical historian who refers to a document with this title: “...as it has been written in the book of the Assumption of Moses” (*Historia Ecclesiae* 2.17.17); see A.-M. Denis, *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca una cum historicorum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmentis* (PVTG 3; Leiden: Brill 1970) 63–64.

The Latin text is a translation from Greek dating from around the fifth century AD, which in turn is a translation of a text originally written in a Semitic language,² most likely Hebrew.³ In its present form, the *Testament of Moses* can be dated to the early years of the first century AD,⁴ but many scholars assume that the work was created in two stages, namely that the original document was written in the time of the Maccabees (mid-second century BC), and that it was then updated and reworked in the early first century AD.⁵

In terms of form, the *Testament of Moses* is a farewell speech (i.e. a testament) addressed by Moses before his death to Joshua, uttered immediately before the entry into Canaan. The composition of the entire work is modelled on Deuteronomy, and the document comprises an introduction (ch. 1), the main part of the work, where the history of Israel from the occupation of the Promised Land to the end times is presented in the form of a speech by Moses (ch. 2–9), and the entire work ends with a dialogue between Moses and Joshua (ch. 11–12). An eschatological prophecy taking the form of a hymn (10:1–10) concludes

2 Cf. D.H. Wallace, “The Semitic Origin of the Assumption of Moses,” *TZ* 11 (1955) 321–328. Ernest-Marie Laperrousaz (*Le Testament de Moïse [généralement appelé ‘Assomption de Moïse’]*. Traduction avec introduction et notes [Semitica 19; Paris: Maisonneuve 1970] 25) and George W.E. Nickelsburg (*Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah. A Historical and Literary Introduction* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2005] 77) are of the opinion that the Semitic original may have been either Hebrew or Aramaic.

3 Advocates for the Hebrew original include R.H. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses. Translated from the Latin Sixth Century Manuscript [...] Emended with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (London: Black 1897) xxxviii–xliv; S. Mowinkel, “The Hebrew Equivalent of Taxo in Assumption of Moses IX,” *Congress Volume, Copenhagen 1953* (VTSup 1; Leiden: Brill 1953) 89–90; M. Delcor, “Contribution à l’étude de la législation des sectaires de Damas et de Qumrân,” *RB* 62 (1955) 60; M.E. Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period. Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (ed. M.E. Stone) (CRINT 2.2; Assen: Van Gorcum – Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1984) 419; S. Mędala, *Wprowadzenie do literatury międzytestamentalnej* (BZ.TNT 1; Kraków: Enigma Press 1994) 218; for a review of the various hypotheses about the original language of the document, cf. M. Parchem, “Testament Mojżesza. Wprowadzenie, tłumaczenie i noty,” *Pisma apokaliptyczne i testamenty* (ed. M. Parchem) (Apokryfy Starego Testamentu 2; Kraków – Mogilany: Enigma Press 2010) 307–308.

4 This is the opinion of, among others, Charles, *The Assumption of Moses*, lv–lviii; R.H. Charles, “The Assumption of Moses,” *APOT* II, 411; E. Brandenburger, *Himmelfahrt Moses* (JSHRZ V.2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn 1976) 59–60; J. Priest, “*Testament of Moses* (First Century A.D.). A New Translation and Introduction,” *OTP* I, 920–921; J. Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses. A Critical Edition with Commentary* (SVTP 10; Leiden: Brill 1993) 116–117.

5 Proponents of this hypothesis include J. Licht, “Taxo, or the Apocalyptic Doctrine of Vengeance,” *JJS* 12 (1961) 95–103; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, “An Antiochan Date for the Testament of Moses,” *Studies on the Testament of Moses. Seminar Papers* (ed. G.W.E. Nickelsburg) (SCS 4; Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature 1973) 33–37; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 74; J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 1998) 129; A. Yarbro Collins, “Composition and Redaction of the Testament of Moses 10,” *HTR* 69 (1976) 179–186; Parchem, “Testament Mojżesza,” 308–309; more on the successive stages of the development of *The Testament of Moses*, cf. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ. A New English Edition* (Edinburgh: Clark 1995) III.1, 281–283; J.J. Collins, “The Date and Provenance of the Testament of Moses,” *Studies on the Testament of Moses. Seminar Papers* (ed. G.W.E. Nickelsburg) (SCS 4; Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature 1973) 17–30; O. Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes in den frühjüdischen Schriften* (OBO 58; Freiburg [Schweiz]: Universitätsverlag – Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1984) 151–158; D. Maggiorotti, “La datazione del Testamento di Mosè,” *Hen* 15 (1993) 235–262.

the speech and concerns the events of the End Times. Although it represents a literary form, called a testament,⁶ because of its formal elements, the *Testament of Moses* is an apocalyptic work based on Deuteronomy 31–34, similar to the group of texts referred to as the so-called historical apocalypses⁷ in which Moses, before his death, makes Joshua his successor and recounts to him the future events from the entry into Canaan to the Roman period. The text ends with a prediction of the events of the end times, when God will defeat all hostile forces and His royal reign will be inaugurated, which will last forever.

The *Testament of Moses* shows many similarities with the Jewish apocalypses of the Second Temple period. Numerous motifs characteristic of apocalyptic literature appear in the document, which is particularly evident in its juxtaposition with the content and message of the Book of Daniel.⁸ In both works, the main message focuses on determinism, according to which God directs the course of all events and history culminates in His establishment of an eternal kingdom. In both, events are depicted in the earthly realm as well as in the heavenly one. Both works contain a message of consolation and hope in a crisis, especially during a period of religious persecution, hence their content is an encouragement to be faithful to God even at the cost of martyrdom while showing the sense of suffering and the value of the sacrifice of those who trusted God even at the cost of their lives. In both works, the reward that the faithful to God will receive after the resurrection will consist in their participation in communion with heavenly beings. Because of the many similarities both in content and form, the hymnic eschatological prophecies found in *T. Mos.* 10:1–10 and Dan 12:1–3 deserve special attention.

1. Apocalyptic Elements in the *Testament of Moses*

In apocalyptic writings, God is presented first and foremost as the King of the entire universe, the supreme Ruler, mighty and great in His glory, the only Master of everything and everyone. In historical apocalypses, God is portrayed as the Ruler of history who controls the course of events from the beginning to the end of history, namely as Creator He brings everything into existence and as Judge of the end times, He restores the original order and

6 Cf. E. Cortès, *Los discursos de adiós des Gn 49 a Jn 13–17. Pistas para la historia de un género literario en la antigua judía* (Colectánea San Paciano 23; Barcelona: Herder 1976) 140–146; E. von Nordheim, *Die Lehre der Alten. I. Das Testament als Literaturgattung im Judentum der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit* (ALGHJ 13; Leiden: Brill 1980) 194–207; cf. also A.B. Kolenkow, “The Assumption of Moses as a Testament,” *Studies on the Testament of Moses. Seminar Papers* (ed. G.W.E. Nickelsburg) (SCS 4; Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature 1973) 71–77; C. Münchow, *Ethik und Eschatologie. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der frühjüdischen Apokalyptik mit einem Ausblick auf das Neue Testament* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt 1981) 65–75.

7 This category includes, among others, various sections of the *Ethiopian Book of Enoch* (*The Animal Apocalypse, 1 En.* 85–90; *The Apocalypse of Weeks, 1 En.* 93:1–10; 91:11–17), the Book of Daniel, *The Fourth Book of Ezra* (*4 Ezra*), *The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* (*2 Bar*); cf. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 6–7; Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” 419; Stanisław Mędała (*Wprowadzenie do literatury międzytestamentalnej*, 219) calls this document an “apocalypse.”

8 Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 131–132.

justice. The dominant theme of all apocalypses is God's royal power, i.e. His unlimited dominion, which extends to all spheres of the universe, i.e. the heavens, the earth and the underworld.⁹

1.1. God as King and His kingdom

The *Testament of Moses* twice refers to God as King (4:2; 10:3) and once to His kingdom (10:1).¹⁰ Several titles of God typical of apocalyptic literature expressing His royal authority over the entire world appear in the context of a prayer for the chosen people (4:1–4):¹¹

¹ Tunc intravit¹² unus qui supra eos est et expandit¹³ manus et ponit¹⁴ genua sua et oravit¹⁵ pro eis dicens:

² Domine omnis, rex in alta sede, qui dominaris saeculo, qui voluisti plebem hanc esse tibi plebem [hanc] exceptam. Tunc voluisti invocari eorum Deus secus testamentum quod fecisti cum patribus eorum.

³ Et ierunt captivi in terram alienam cum uxoribus et natis suis et circa ostium allofilorum et ubi est maestitia magna.

⁴ Respice et miserere eorum, Domine caelestis!

¹ *Then one will come in, one who is over them, and he will spread forth his hands, and bend his knees and pray for them saying:*

² *O Lord of all, King (seated) on a lofty throne, who rules the world, who has willed that this people should be [this] your chosen people. Then you willed to be called their God, by virtue of the Covenant which made with their fathers.*

³ *And they went as slaves into a foreign land, together with their wives and children, and (surrounded by) the gates of heathen nations, and where there is great sorrow.*

⁴ *Behold and have mercy on them, O Lord of heaven!*

The introduction, which mentions a praying person who pleads with God for their people (4:1), is followed by the actual prayer (vv. 2–4), consisting of a doxology (v. 2a), a mention of the Covenant and exile (vv. 2b–3) and a plea for mercy (v. 4). In the doxology, the prayers praise God's omnipotence and His power by which He exercises royal authority over the entire world. This is expressed by the designation of God as "Lord of all" (Dominus omnis) and, above all, as "King (seated) on a lofty throne" (*Rex in alta sede*),

⁹ Cf. H.J. Wicks, *The Doctrine of God in the Jewish Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature* (London: Hunter & Longhurst 1915) 127–128; M. Parchem, *Obraz Boga w pismach apokaliptycznych okresu Drugiej Świątyni* (Biblica et Judaica 1; Bydgoszcz: Oficyna KRD 2013) 111–150.

¹⁰ Cf. Parchem, *Obraz Boga w pismach apokaliptycznych*, 127–129.

¹¹ In this article, all Latin texts of the *Testament of Moses* are as quoted in the edition prepared by A.M. Ceriani of 1861, which constitutes the *editio princeps* of the document, and according to two later revised editions of the text, namely C. Clemen (ed.), *Die Himmelfahrt des Mose* (Kleine Texte für theologische Verlesungen und Übungen 10; Bonn: Marcus & Weber 1904) 4–15; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 1–25; English translation was made by the author of this article.

¹² This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *intrabit*.

¹³ This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *expandet*.

¹⁴ This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *ponet*.

¹⁵ This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *orabit*.

which indicates the location of God's throne in the heavens (see *1 En.* 14:18; Dan 7:9–10; cf. Isa 6:1; 66:1). God's unlimited power is also expressed by the other titles: "who rules the world," i.e. "Lord of the world" (*qui dominaris saeculo*) and "Lord of heaven" (*Dominus caelestis*).¹⁶ It is noteworthy that the title "Lord of heaven" appears in Dan 5:23 in the context of Daniel's interpretation of the mysterious inscription given to Balthasar (vv. 17–28), which highlights the power of God that is superior not only to earthly kings but also to all pagan deities (see also "God of heaven" in Dan 2:18, 19, 37, 44 and "God in heaven" in Dan 2:28). In the *Testament of Moses* – as in the Book of Daniel – God is portrayed as exercising His royal dominion over the entire universe from a throne in the heavens, and thus the scope of His authority includes both the heavenly and the earthly realms, i.e. "everything."

God sitting on the throne and His kingdom is mentioned twice in *T. Mos.* 10:1–3, in the context of a hymn describing the events of the end times (10:1–10). The words "And then His kingdom (*regnum illius*) will appear in all His creation" (v. 1) express the truth that God will reveal the might of His royal power to the entire world, which is highlighted by the mention of "His creation." The total subordination of the world to God's power is indicated by the description of the reaction of the cosmos to His revelation (vv. 4–6). As in other apocalyptic writings, the manifestation of the kingdom of God is a manifestation of God as King of the entire world and at the same time becomes the beginning of eschatological events (see Dan 2:44–45; *3 Sib.* 47–48; *2 Bar.* 39:7). God's royal authority is highlighted even more clearly in v. 3: "For the Celestial One will arise from His royal throne, will come forth from His holy habitation with fierceness and anger because of His sons." The title "Celestial One" (*caelestis*) with which God is endowed and the mention of rising from "His royal throne" (*sede regni sui*) indicates that the heavens are the place where God resides and where He exercises His royal authority. The entire text contains elements typical of descriptions of the theophany, which also has a judgmental character (see Isa 14:22; 26:20–21; 35:4; *1 En.* 1:3–9; 11:4; 91:7).¹⁷

1.2. Determinism

Although the *Testament of Moses* is dominated by a Deuteronomistic theology of history (according to the scheme: sin – punishment – conversion – salvation), which emphasises the conviction that Israel, as God's chosen people, will not be annihilated and that its situation depends on its fidelity to the covenant, a determinism of an apocalyptic nature is very

¹⁶ Cf. Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes*, 162–164; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 176; M. Parchem, *Pojęcie królestwa Bożego w Księdze Daniela oraz jego recepcja w pismach qumrańskich i w apokaliptyce żydowskiej* (RSBibl 9; Warszawa: Vocatio 2002) 427–428; cf. also G.A. Keddie, "Judaean Apocalypticism and the Unmasking of Ideology: Foreign and National Rulers in the Testament of Moses," *JSJ* 44 (2013) 330–331.

¹⁷ Cf. P. Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck] 1934) 168–169; Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes*, 165–173; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 233; cf. also M. Parchem, "Teofania w 1 Hen 1,3c-9 w kontekście tradycji biblijnej," *Studia z biblistyki* (ed. R. Bartnicki) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW 2012) VIII, 73–108.

evident in its theological message.¹⁸ All the events of past times have been established and foreseen by God, who revealed them to Moses: “Is not this what Moses declared (*testabatur*) to us in prophecy [...]? It came upon us according to His (i.e. God’s) words, as he declared to us in those days, and was fulfilled upon us as slaves in the land of the east” (3:11–13). It is noteworthy that the Latin verb *testari* occurring in the text as equivalent to the Greek μαρτυρεῖν means “to bear witness, to testify,” as well as “to announce, to notify.” The truth that everything has been foreseen by God is explicitly expressed in 12:4–5 and 12:13:

⁴ Omnes gentes quae sunt in orbe terrarum Deus creavit, et nos praevidit, illos et nos, ab initio creaturae orbis terrarum usque ad exitum saeculi. Et nihil est ab eo neglectum, usque ad pusillum, sed omnia praevidit et pronovit [...]

⁵ Dominus omnia quae futura essent in hoc orbe terrarum providit.

...

¹³ Exivit enim Deus qui praevidit omnia in saecula [...]

⁴ All the nations that are on the entire earth were created by God, and He foresaw us, both them and us, from the beginning of the creation of the entire earth until the end of the world. And nothing was overlooked by Him, not even the smallest detail, but He foresaw and knew everything in advance [...]

⁵ The Lord has seen in advance all the things that will happen throughout the earth.

...

¹³ For God will step forward, the one who sees all things in the world beforehand [...]

The verb in its proper classical form, namely *praevidere* (vv. 4 and 13), as well as *providere* (v. 5), was used to denote the action “to foresee, to see beforehand.” It should be noted that the verb *pronovit* occurring in v. 4 is a correction of the extant Latin text since *provovit* that makes no sense appears in the Ceriani edition. As Johannes Tromp notes, in Latin the prefixes *prae-* and *pro-* are often used interchangeably, and thus the verbs *praevidere* // *providere*, “to foresee, to see beforehand” and *pronoscere*, “to know beforehand,” which is a neologism (cf. the Greek verb προγινώσκω), are synonymous terms for the same action.¹⁹ The prior knowledge that God possesses and thus His knowledge of things to come is a frequent motif appearing in the literature of the Second Temple period (e.g. Sir 23:20; Wis 8:8; 1 En. 9:5, 11; 39:11; 84:3; 2 En. 66:3–5 [longer version]; 2 Bar. 21:5, 8, 10, 12; Jub. 1:29; 1QS 3:15–16; CD 2:7–10).²⁰

¹⁸ Cf. Priest, “*Testament of Moses*,” 922; cf. also Brandenburger, *Himmelfahrt Moses*, 63–64; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 122–123; L. Vegas Montaner, “*Testamento de Moises*,” *Apócrifos del Antiguo Testamento* (eds. A. Díez Macho et al.) (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad 1987) V, 245–246; D. Maggiorotti, “*Testamento di Mosè (Assumptio Mosis)*,” *Apocrifi dell’Antico Testamento* (ed. P. Sacchi) (Brescia: Paideia 2000) IV, 202–203; Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 130–131; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 75.

¹⁹ Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 263.

²⁰ Cf. Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 262–263; for more on God’s omniscience, especially His foreknowledge of all things, cf. Parchem, *Obraz Boga w pismach apokaliptycznych*, 415–423.

The primary purpose of the author of the document is to reinforce the belief that God's intervention is near (10:1–10) and that God's promises to His people will be fulfilled because God is faithful to the covenant established with Israel (12:3–13). The *Testament of Moses*, like other apocalyptic writings, offers the hope of God's help to those who are persecuted. The basis of the trust placed in God is the firm conviction that God's promises arising from the covenant are certain (1:8–9; 3:9; 4:2–6; 12:7–13).

1.3. The Reason for Creating the World

The question of the cause for which God created the world does not appear explicitly in the biblical tradition. The issue is approached and formulated in writings of an apocalyptic nature (*4 Ezra*, *2 Bar.*, *Apoc. Ezra*, *Apoc. Sedr.*) and further developed in the later tradition of both Jews and Christians. The *Testament of Moses* is the document in which the cause of the creation of the world is mentioned for the first time.²¹ In 1:12 the author states: "For He created the world because of His people" (*Creavit enim orbem terrarum propter plebem suam*).

In decoding the correct meaning of the Latin phrase, a grammatical analysis of the two components of the entire phrase, namely *enim* and *propter*, is essential. The conjunction *enim* does not occur here in the sense of an explanation, an extension of a thought or a conclusion, but denotes a motive, a cause, a reason for which something has been effected, and therefore "since, for, because, on behalf,"²² like its Greek (ἐπει) and Hebrew (עַל) equivalents. Hence the entire expression in 1:12 is a causative sentence.²³ The Latin preposition *propter* with *acc.* – as well as the Greek preposition διὰ with *acc.* – signifies a cause, a reason, a motive by which something is accomplished, something exists, thus "because of, on account of (something)." In the Vulgate, the preposition *propter* is a translation of various Hebrew terms, but it is most often equivalent to the word עַל, which often occurs in the Hebrew Bible in a causal sense. In this meaning, the entire phrase expresses the thought of a plan, an intention, a determination (see, for example, Ps 23:3; 25:11; 106:8; Ezek 20:9; Isa 48:9, and others).²⁴ This understanding of the statement in 1:12 – i.e. in a causal sense – is indicated by the words in the next verse, where it is stated, with regard to the truth of the creation of the world for Israel's sake, that God "did not reveal this plan in relation to creation from the beginning of the world" (1:13).

21 Priest, "Testament of Moses," 922; Vegas Montaner, "Testamento de Moises," 245; N.J. Hofmann, *Die Assumptio Mosis. Studien zur Rezeption massgültiger Überlieferung* (JSJSup 67; Leiden: Brill 2000) 295; M. Parchem, "Dlaczego Bóg stworzył świat? O przyczynie stworzenia świata w świetle pism apokaliptycznych," *Trud w Panu nie jest daremny* (por. 1 Kor 15,58). *Studia ofiarowane Księdzu Profesorowi Doktorowi Habilitowanemu Janowi Załęskiemu w 70. rocznicę urodzin* (ed. M. Linke) (Niepokalanów: Wydawnictwo Ojców Franciszkanów 2010) 461–462.

22 Cf. R. Kühner – C. Stegmann, *Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1955) II, 121–122.

23 Cf. A. Schalit, *Untersuchungen zur Assumptio Mosis* (ALGHJ 17; Leiden: Brill 1989) 127.

24 Cf. Schalit, *Untersuchungen zur Assumptio Mosis*, 128–129; for more on this issue, cf. P. Jouon – T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 2003) II, 638–639 [§ 170f].

In *T. Mos.* 1:12 – as in *4 Ezra* 6:55, 59; 7:10–11 – the assertion that God created the world because of His people (*plebs sua*) expresses the truth of Israel's being chosen (see 4:2).²⁵ It is noteworthy that in 1:12–13, a clear contrast appears between the “people” (*plebs*) and the “[heathen] nations” (*gentes*), which alludes to the frequent contrast in biblical tradition between Israel as God's people and the pagan nations. It seems that the idea, which appears in 1:12, that God created the world because of His people, is a consequence of the conviction that Israel is the people God chose from the beginning of creation in order to love them and, at the same time, to punish all pagan nations. It can be assumed that the author of the *Testament of Moses*, by highlighting the truth about the creation of the world on account of Israel as God's chosen people, which he further emphasises by mentioning the rebuke of the pagan nations, thus reveals God's plan according to which, in the present time, God's people experience much suffering and persecution from the pagans, but in the end times Israel will be saved and exalted, while the pagan nations will be punished and annihilated (cf. *T. Mos.* 1:13; 10:7–10).²⁶ In later apocalypses, righteous people will be considered as the cause of God's creation of the world (*2 Bar.* 15:7; 21:24; *4 Ezra* 8:1), or humankind in general (*4 Ezra* 8:44; *2 Bar.* 14:18; *Apoc. Ezra.* 5:19; *Apoc. Sedr.* 3:1–5).²⁷

1.4. Readiness for Martyrdom

The story of Taxo of the tribe of Levi and his seven sons (9:1–7) plays an important role in the *Testament of Moses* because, as the turning point of the document as a whole, it represents the transition from the time of persecution (chs. 6–8) to the revelation of the kingdom of God (ch. 10). Taxo and his sons – as a symbol of the innocently suffering righteous – initiate the fulfilment of the final salvation by voluntarily undertaking suffering and martyrdom.

¹ Tunc illo die erit homo de tribu Levvi²⁸ cuius nomen erit Taxo, qui habens VII filios dicet ad eos rogans [...]

...

⁴ Nunc ergo, filii, audite me! Videte enim, et scite quia numquam temptantes Deum nec parentes nec proavi eorum, ut praetereant mandata illius.

⁵ Scitis enim, quia haec sunt vires nobis. Et hoc faciemus:

⁶ jejunemus triduo, et quarto die intremus in spelunca quae in agro est, et moriamur potius quam praetereamus mandata Domini dominorum, Dei parentum nostrorum.

⁷ Hoc enim si faciemus et moriemur, sanguis noster vindicabitur²⁹ coram Domino.

²⁵ Cf. Laperrousaz, *Le Testament de Moïse*, 82; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 141.

²⁶ Cf. Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 141; Kolenkow, “The Assumption of Moses as a Testament,” 72–74; for more on this, cf. B. Halpern-Amaru, “Redesigning Redemption: Covenant in the *Testament of Moses*,” *Summoning. Ideas of the Covenant and Interpretive Theory* (ed. E. Spolsky) (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1993) 131–152; Parchem, “Dlaczego Bóg stworzył świat?” 464–465.

²⁷ For further discussion, cf. Parchem, “Dlaczego Bóg stworzył świat?” 465–483.

²⁸ This is the original spelling in the manuscript.

²⁹ This is the original spelling in the manuscript. Should be *vindicabitur* (the intervocalic b becomes fricative and is written v).

- ¹ *Then, on that day, there will appear a man from the tribe of Levi, whose name will be Taxo, who will have seven sons, who will say to them asking [...]*
- ...
- ⁴ *So now, sons, listen to me! See, then, and know that neither our parents nor their ancestors provoked God by transgressing His commandments.*
- ⁵ *And you know that this is our strength, and that this is what we will be doing:*
- ⁶ *Let us fast three days, and on the fourth day let us go into a cave that is in the field, and let us die rather than transgress the commandments of the Lord of lords, the God of our fathers.*
- ⁷ *For if we do this and die, our blood will be avenged before the Lord.*

It seems that according to the author of *Testament of Moses*, the voluntary death of Taxo and his sons provokes God to act, resulting in the infliction of punishment on the persecutors. The expression “our blood will be avenged by the Lord” (v. 7) indicating the provocation of God’s vengeance clearly refers to Deut 32:35–43: “To Me belongeth vengeance and recompense [...]. For the Lord shall judge His people and repent for His servants [...], I will render vengeance to Mine enemies and will reward them that hate Me [...], for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries.” Taxo’s attitude was presented as a model of conduct in which faithfulness to God by keeping His commandments proves to be of the highest value. Because Taxo’s speech precedes God’s direct intervention, in which the wicked will be annihilated and the righteous exalted (10:1–10), it becomes a picture of the persecution suffered by God’s faithful in the end times.³⁰ A similar attitude is referred to in 1 Macc 2:29–38, where the pious Jews, having voluntarily given up defending themselves and their families against persecutors so as not to profane the Sabbath, state: “Let us all die in our innocence; heaven and earth testify for us that you are killing us unjustly” (v. 37; cf. 2 Macc 7:2; Dan 11:32–35). The just God will advocate those who have remained faithful to Him even at the cost of their own lives, while their reward will be eternal salvation. The author of the *Testament of Moses* seems to imply that true salvation and ultimate victory will not be the result of human efforts and actions (= the Maccabean uprising), but will be the result of God’s intervention on behalf of those who have remained faithful to the Covenant. In the *Testament of Moses* – as in the Book of Daniel – a pietistic movement developing in sapiential circles of priestly provenance comes to the fore, which focused above all on maintaining fidelity to God, purity and communion with the heavenly world. Representatives of

³⁰ Cf. Licht, “Taxo, or the Apocalyptic Doctrine of Vengeance,” 95–103; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in the Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 26; Cambridge: Harvard University Press – London: Oxford University Press 1972) 97; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 76; J.J. Collins, “Some Remaining Traditio-Historical Problems in the Testament of Moses,” *Studies on the Testament of Moses. Seminar Papers* (ed. G.W.E. Nickelsburg) (SCS 4; Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature 1973) 41; Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 131; Mędala, *Wprowadzenie do literatury międzytestamentalnej*, 219; Parchem, “Testament Mojżesza,” 312–313; Keddie, “Judaean Apocalypticism and the Unmasking of Ideology,” 322; cf. also D.C. Carlson, “Vengeance and Angelic Mediation in Testament of Moses 9 and 10,” *JBL* 101 (1982) 85–95.

this trend advocated active opposition to persecution, but not by the armed resistance favoured in 1–2 Macc; the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 En. 85–90); the *Qumran War Rule* (1QM), but by accepting suffering and death for their purifying value, because in this way one can gain participation in the resurrection and future salvation.³¹

2. Hymnic Eschatological Prophecy (*T. Mos.* 10:1–10)

An eschatological prophecy taking the form of a hymn (10:1–10) concludes Moses' speech to Joshua and pertains to the events of the end times.

- ¹ Et tunc parebit regnum illius in omni creatura illius.
Et tunc zabalus finem habebit,
et tristitia[m] cum eo adducetur.
- ² Tunc implebuntur manus nuntii
qui est in summo constitutus,
qui protinus vindicavit³² illos ab inimicis eorum.
- ³ Exurget enim Caelestis a sede regni sui
et exiet de habitatione sancta sua
cum indignationem et iram³³ propter filios suos.
- ⁴ Et tremebit terra,
usque ad fines suas concutietur,
et alti montes humiliabuntur et concutientur
et convalles cadent.
- ⁵ Sol non dabit lumen
et in tenebris convertent se cornua lunae
et confringentur,
et tota convertit³⁴ se in sanguine;
et orbis stellarum conturbavitur³⁵.
- ⁶ Et mare usque ad abyssum decedit³⁶,
ad fontes aquarum deficient
et flumina expavescent.

31 Cf. G. Zerbe, "Pacifism' and 'Passive Resistance' in Apocalyptic Writings: A Critical Evaluation," *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (eds. J.H. Charlesworth – C.A. Evans) (JSPSup 14, SSEJC 2; Sheffield: JSOT 1993) 93–94; for more on this topic, cf. J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (HSM 16; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press 1977) 191–218; M. Parchem, *Księga Daniela. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz* (NKB.ST 26; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2008) 54–62.

32 This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *vindicabit*.

33 Here the preposition *cum* is followed by an accusative (the classical ablative is used with *cum* 15 times in the manuscript).

34 The third person singular future tense ending is written as *-it* instead of *-et*.

35 This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *conturbabitur*.

36 The third person singular future tense ending is written as *-it* instead of *-et*.

- 7 Quia exurgit³⁷ summus
Deus aeternus solus,
et palam veniet ut vindicet gentes
et perdet omnia idola eorum.
- 8 Tunc felix eris, tu Istrahel³⁸,
et ascendes supra cervices et alas aquilae,
et inplebuntur.
- 9 Et altavit³⁹ te Deus,
et faciet te herere⁴⁰ caelo stellarum,
loco habitationis ejus.
- 10 Et conspiges⁴¹ a summo,
et vides⁴² inimicos tuos in terram
et cognosces illos et gaudebis
et agis⁴³ gratias
et confiteberis creatori tuo.

- 1 *And then His kingdom will appear in all His creation,
and then the devil will meet his end,
and sorrow will disappear with him.*
- 2 *Then the hands of the herald will be filled
who has been anointed in the highest (place),
who will then take vengeance on their enemies.*
- 3 *For the Celestial One will arise from His royal throne,
and will come forth from His holy habitation
with fierceness and anger because of His sons.*
- 4 *And the earth will tremble,
and will be shaken to its farthest parts;
and high mountains will be made lower and shaken,
and valleys will fall.*
- 5 *The sun will not give light;
and the horns of the moon will turn to darkness,
and will be shattered to pieces,
and [the moon] will entirely be turned into blood;
and the course of the stars will be disturbed;*
- 6 *And the sea will descend into the abyss,
and the springs of the waters will vanish,
and the rivers will dry up.*

37 The third person singular future tense ending is written as *-it* instead of *-et*.

38 This is the original spelling in the manuscript.

39 This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *altabit*.

40 This is the original spelling in the manuscript. Should be *haerere* ("ae" is monophthongized as "e").

41 This is the original spelling in the manuscript. It should be *conspices*.

42 The verb in the present tense is used in the sense of the future tense (*videbit*).

43 The verb in the present tense is used in the sense of the future tense (*ages*).

- 7 *Because the Most High will arise,
the One and only Eternal God,
and will reveal Himself to punish the heathen nations,
and will destroy all their idols.*
- 8 *Then you will be happy, O Israel!
and you will mount on the neck and wings of an eagle,
[because the time given to them] will have ended its course.*
- 9 *And God will exalt you,
and will place you permanently in the heaven of stars,
in His abode.*
- 10 *And you will look down from the heights,
and you will see your enemies on the ground
and upon recognising them, you will rejoice,
and you will acknowledge your Creator.*

The end-times events described by the author of *T. Mos.* 10:1–10 are portrayed as God’s intervention, which will occur in response to the death of those who have proved faithful to Him in persecution (see 9:6–7). After a general introduction (vv. 1–2), God’s action is shown through the terminology used in the descriptions of the theophanies (vv. 3–6), the result of which will be the punishment of the pagan nations (v. 7) and the exaltation of Israel (vv. 8–10).

Verses 1–2 provide an introduction to the entire hymn, in which the events of the end times are generally framed in positive terms, i.e. the establishment of the kingdom of God, as well as in negative terms, i.e. the annihilation of the devil and sorrow, i.e. evil.

The words “His kingdom will appear in all His creation” express the truth that God’s royal power will be revealed throughout the universe (see also 3 *Sib.* 47–48; 2 *Bar.* 39:7). The expression “His kingdom” (*regnum illius*) is here synonymous with the might, power and majesty of God, who is the one and only supreme King seated on the heavenly throne (see 4:2).⁴⁴ God’s royal power, which extends to the heavens and the earth, is expressed by the titles: *Caelestis*, “Celestial One,” i.e. “He who dwells in the heavens” (v. 3), *Summus*, “Most High,” and *Deus aeternus solus*, “the One and only Eternal God” (v. 7).

The result of God’s revelation in the power of His royal authority is the annihilation of the devil: “and then the devil will meet his end” (*et tunc zabolus*⁴⁵ *finem habebit*). The mention of the annihilation of the devil highlights the absolute power of God, who, by establishing His kingdom, destroys all hostile forces (see *Jub.* 23:29; 50:5).⁴⁶ On the other hand,

44 Cf. Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde*, 167–169; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 229.

45 The form *zabolus* is an orthographic variant of the word *diabolus* (cf. the Greek διάβολος); the same variant appears in an early 4th century work by the Christian writer Lactantius (*De mortibus persecutorum*, 16), cf. C.T. Lewis – C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews’ Edition of Freund’s Latin Dictionary, Revised, Enlarged, and in Great Part Rewritten*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1958) 2018.

46 Cf. G. von Rad – W. Foerster, “διαβάλλω διάβολος,” *TDNT* II, 78; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 229; Parchem, “Testament Mojżesza,” 333.

bearing in mind the suggestion that there are many allusions to a court trial⁴⁷ throughout the hymn, the annihilation of the devil may mean his expulsion from God's heavenly court and his deprivation of the possibility of exercising the accusatory function he held there (cf. Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7).⁴⁸

Together with the devil, “sorrow” (*tristitia*), which is of his making, will be annihilated (cf. 1 John 3:8: “The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the works of the devil”). The motif of sorrow is perhaps understood here as despair and suffering caused by the plagues and calamities that befell Israel because of its sins. The author of *Testament of Moses*, by stating that “sorrow will disappear with him (i.e. the devil)” (v. 1) expresses the conviction that the establishment of God's kingdom will transform sorrow into joy (v. 10). A similar motif appears frequently in both Jewish writings and Christian tradition (see, for example, *Jub.* 23:29; *4 Ezra* 6:27; *2 Bar.* 73:1–4; *5 Sib.* 385; *T. Jud.* 25:4; John 16:20; Rev 21:4; cf. Isa 35:10; 51:11).

In v. 2, a heavenly being appears described as a “herald, messenger, angel” (*nuntius*; Gr. ἄγγελος), who is most likely to be identified with Michael,⁴⁹ the patron and protector of Israel (see Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; *1 En.* 47:2; *1QM* 17:6–7; *T. Lev.* 3:3). Michael's role in *T. Mos.* 10 is to perform two functions. On the one hand, he is credited with priestly functions and is presented as an intercessor, as indicated by the words “the hands of the herald will be filled” (*implebuntur manus nuntii*). Moreover, the herald performs his function in the heavens, as clearly indicated by the reference to anointing him “in the highest place” (*qui est in summo constitutus*). The expression “fill the hands” is a technical term of consecration to the priest (see e.g. Exod 28:41; 29:29, 33, 35; Lev 8:33; 16:32; 21:10; Num 3:3; Judg 17:5, 12; 1 Kgs 13:33; 2 Kgs 13:9; *T. Lev.* 8:10; *Jos. Asen.* 27:2). The motif of priestly activity of heavenly beings involving intercession appears in many Second Temple period writings (e.g. Tob 12:12, 15; *1 En.* 9:1–4, 10–11; 10:13; 99:3; *3 Bar.* 11–16). It is noteworthy that in *3 Bar.* 11–16, Michael is portrayed as the supreme commander and keeper of the keys of heaven who acts as an intermediary, which is depicted in that he holds in his hands an immense vessel filled with the virtues and good deeds of the righteous, which he then brings to God. In the *Testament of Moses*, the herald is the one who hears the cries for justice of those persecuted and suffering martyrdom (9:6–7) and presents them to God, who is thus

⁴⁷ The juridical nature of the hymn in *T. Mos.* 10 is emphasised by Nickelsburg (*Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 29–31) who calls it a “judgment scene.”

⁴⁸ Cf. J. Becker, *Das Heil Gottes. Heils- und Sündenbegriffe in den Qumrantexten und im Neuen Testament* (SUNT 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1964) 100–101; Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes*, 170.

⁴⁹ Thus, i.a., Charles, *The Assumption of Moses*, 39–40; Charles, “The Assumption of Moses,” 421; J. Gray, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God* (Edinburgh: Clark 1979) 254; J.J. Collins, “The Testament (Assumption) of Moses,” *Outside the Old Testament* (ed. M. de Jonge) (Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985) 156; Priest, “Testament of Moses,” 932; E.-M. Laperrousaz, “Testament de Moïse,” *La Bible. Ecrits Intertestamentaires* (eds. A. Dupont-Sommer – M. Philonenko) (Paris: Gallimard 1987) 1010; Parchem, “Testament Mojżesza,” 333.

prompted to intervene and avenge the blood that has been shed (see also 10:3: God will reveal Himself “with fierceness and anger because of His sons”).⁵⁰

The herald, on the other hand, is the one who “will take vengeance on their enemies” (*vindicavit illos ab inimicis eorum*). His function is not only of a military nature, since the result of his activity carried out in the name of God will be the annihilation of all enemies, but also contains juridical connotations, since the Latin expression *vindicare ... ab*, “to take revenge on (someone)” can mean “to make a claim, to free, to deliver.”⁵¹ The combination of military and juridical activities that the herald (*nuntius*) carries out in *T. Mos.* 10:2 is very similar to the function that Michael performs in Dan 12:1.

The description of God’s intervention in eschatological times occurring in vv. 3–6 draws on language found in descriptions of theophany appearing in biblical tradition (e.g. Exod 19:16–20; Deut 33:2–3; Judg 5:4–5; Ps 18:8–16; 29:3–9; 68:8–9; 77:17–20; 97:3–6; Isa 30:27–33; Mic 1:3–7; Hab 3:3–15; see also *1 En.* 1:3–9). Descriptions of theophany usually involve two interconnected events, namely the “arrival” of God and the stirring of nature, which takes the form of a variety of cataclysms of cosmic scope, including thunders, flashes of lightning, earthquakes, raging waters, etc.⁵²

The revelation of God (v. 3) is described by the author of *Testament of Moses* using verbs expressing movement: “will arise from His royal throne” (*exurget ... a sederegni sui*) and “come forth from His holy habitation” (*exiet de habitatione sancta sua*). Undoubtedly, in both expressions, the place from which God comes forth is the heavens as His permanent abode (see e.g. Deut 26:15; 1 Kgs 8:30; Isa 26:21; 63:15; Jer 25:30; Amos 1:2; Mic 1:3; Hab 3:3; Zech 2:13; see also *1 En.* 14:8–23).

In vv. 4–6, there is a description of a disturbance of the order existing in the cosmos, i.e. a violation of the natural laws governing the entire universe, which manifests itself in catastrophes and various types of cataclysms of cosmic proportions that accompany the revelation of God. As Jörg Jeremias notes, most of these belong to the typical elements of theophanic descriptions, but the mention of the disruption of the sun, moon and stars belongs to the tradition associated with the concept of “the day of YHWH” (cf. Amos 5,18–20; Isa 13:10; Joel 2:10; 3:4; 4:15; see also Mark 13:24; Matt 24:29), which indicates that in *T. Mos.* 10:4–6 – as in Hab 3:10–11 – motifs from the traditions of theophany and the day of YHWH were combined.⁵³ It could be presumed that the description of cataclysms of cosmic scope occurring in *T. Mos.* 10:4–6, 7 can be taken as a reference to

50 Cf. G. Kuhn, “Zur Assumptio Mosis,” *ZAW* 43 (1925) 126; Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes*, 170; Carlson, “Vengeance and Angelic Mediation,” 85–95.

51 Cf. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 29; Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes*, 171.

52 For more on this topic, cf. J. Jeremias, *Theophanie. Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* (WMANT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1965); H. Witzkyk, *Teofania w Psalmach* (Kraków: Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne 1985); T. Hiebert, “Theophany in the OT,” *ABD* VI, 505–511; cf. also Parchem, “Teofania w 1 Hen 1,3c–9 w kontekście tradycji biblijnej,” 73–108.

53 Jeremias, *Theophanie*, 98; cf. also Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes*, 167; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 234.

and a type of equivalent of the “time of distress” referred to in Dan 12:1. If this suggestion were correct, then in the description of the end times in *T. Mos.* 10, the idea of oppression by Gentile nations (*gentes*), as mentioned in v. 7, is reinforced by the motif of cataclysms which acquire cosmic character (vv. 4–6). It is noteworthy that in many descriptions of oppression that mark the beginning of eschatological times, there is a combination of the motif of the disruption of the cosmic order with social and political unrest and conflict (e.g. *4 Ezra* 5:1–13; *2 Bar.* 23:5–27:15; see also Mark 13:7–25; Matt 24:6–29; Luke 21:9–26). In *T. Mos.* 10, a sequence of events similar to that in Dan 12:1–3 appears, namely, after a period of distress, which in *Testament of Moses* includes persecution by pagan nations and cataclysms of a cosmic nature, there will be a final intervention of God resulting in the deliverance of the righteous and a reward consisting in their exaltation.

God’s intervention in *T. Mos.* 10 has two aspects: a negative and a positive one. In the negative aspect, the consequence of God’s revelation will be the punishment of “heathen nations (*gentes*)” and “all their idols (*omnia idola eorum*)” (v. 7). The Latin term *idolum* or *idolon* (Gr. εἰδωλον) means a material representation of a deity (statue, image), an image/likeness of a deity.⁵⁴ It seems that here the word “idols” (*idola*) is also a term for the deities worshipped by pagan peoples, in which there is a certain irony hiding, pointing to the foolishness of those who consider objects made by themselves as deities and worship them. In this way, the author of *Testament of Moses* contrasts the power of the one and eternal God with the perishable pagan idols. The motif of the destruction of pagan idols also appears in the description of the theophany in Mic 1:3–7: „All its (i.e. Samaria’s) carved figures (LXX: τὰ γλυπτὰ αὐτῆς; Vlg: *sculptilia*) shall be broken to pieces, all its wages shall be burned in the fire, and all its idols (LXX: τὰ εἰδωλα αὐτῆς; Vlg: *idola*) I will destroy” (v. 7; see also Wis 14:11; *1 En.* 91:9; *3 Sib.* 618).

In the positive aspect, the result of God’s revelation is the deliverance of Israel, which the author of *T. Mos.* 10 expresses in the words: “Then you will be happy, O Israel!” (*tunc felix eris tu, Istrahel*)” (v. 8; cf. Deut 33:29). Israel’s happiness is not only due to the annihilation of its enemies: “because the time given to them will have ended its course” (cf. the mention of the devil, who “will meet his end” in v. 1), but above all because of the care that God extends to His people, as expressed by the image of being carried by an eagle: “and you will mount on the neck and wings of an eagle.” This motif may allude to an image present in the biblical tradition in which Israel is carried on the wings of an eagle to express the truth of God’s care and protection in the context of the exodus from Egypt (Exod 19:4; Deut 32:11). It should be noted, however, that in *T. Mos.* 10:8, the mention of the eagle includes the idea that God will ensure Israel’s safety in eschatological times by lifting it like an eagle on its wings to the heights of the heavens so that from there it can see the defeat of its enemies. In other words, the exaltation of Israel on eagle’s wings towards the heavens is an expression of the truth of its exaltation in the end times, which God will accomplish, as is explicitly mentioned in v. 9. A similar thought, which occurs in the context of the protection of the

54 Cf. Lewis – Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 878.

righteous from the ungodly, is found in the *Epistle of Enoch*: “And in the day of the distress of the sinners, your young will rise up like eagles, and your nest will be higher than that of vultures” (1 *En.* 96:2). The mention of eagles expresses the truth that the righteous will be endowed with strength by which they will be rescued from the danger threatening them from the ungodly (i.e. vultures), which is no doubt a reference to Isa 40:31: “but those who keep waiting for YHWH will renew their strength. Then they’ll soar on wings like eagles.”⁵⁵

The description of Israel’s exaltation in *T. Mos.* 10:9, which is portrayed as placing it in the heaven of the stars: “and will place you permanently in the heaven of stars, in their abode” (*et faciet te herere caelo stellarum, loco habitationis eorum*) is typical of eschatological expectations alluding to Dan 12:3 (cf. 4 *Ezra* 7:97, 125; 2 *Bar.* 51:5; 1 *En.* 51:4; 104:2; *LAB* 19:9; 33:5; *T. Lev.* 14:3; 18:4). It is difficult to determine conclusively whether the author of *Testament of Moses* understands the stars here in the literal sense, i.e. as heavenly bodies, or in the metaphorical sense, i.e. as heavenly beings. It seems that the term “stars” (*stellae*, feminine gender) occurs here to denote celestial beings (*angeli*; Gr. ἄγγελοι, masculine gender), as indicated by the masculine personal pronoun “their” (*eorum*) used to denote the dwelling place of the stars. It is noteworthy that in Dan 12:2–3 the exaltation and participation in fellowship with the heavenly beings (v. 3), will take place after the resurrection (v. 2), with the term for the exaltation itself not appearing here, but only stating in v. 1 that “your people (i.e. Israel) will be delivered.” In contrast, *T. Mos.* 10:9–10 does not explicitly mention the resurrection, but in v. 9 exaltation is explicitly mentioned: “and God will exalt you” (*et altavit te Deus*).

While Dan 12:3 emphasises that the nature of the exaltation of the wise men/teachers of righteousness will be their becoming like the stars, i.e. celestial beings (“will shine like the brightness of the expanse of heaven [...], like the stars”), *T. Mos.* 10:9 highlights the motif of Israel’s being among the stars so that from the heights of heaven they can watch the defeat of their enemies. In biblical tradition, the heavens are the dwelling place of God, who looks down on the earth and its inhabitants from there: “The Lord looks down from heaven, He observes every human being. From His dwelling place, He looks down on all the inhabitants of the earth” (Ps 33:13–14; see also Deut 26:13; Isa 63:6; Ps 102:5–6; 113:5–6). According to *T. Mos.* 10:9–10, the exalted Israel, which has been elevated to the heavens and has become a participant in communion with heavenly beings, will also be able to look down upon the earth to see the final destruction of evil (v. 7). It is worth noting a text from the *Epistle of Enoch* which is similar in tone: “Be hopeful! For you were formerly put to shame through evils and afflictions, but now you will shine like the lights of heaven, and will be seen, and the gate of heaven will be opened to you [...] Be hopeful, and do not abandon your hope, for you will have great joy like the angels of heaven [...] do not be associated

55 Cf. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses*, 42; Laperrousaz, “Le Testament de Moïse,” 1012; Camponovo, *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes*, 168; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 236; L.T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108* (CEJL; Berlin – New York: de Gruyter 2007) 288.

with them (i.e. sinners), but keep far away from their wrongdoing, for you will be associates of the host of heaven” (*1 En.* 104:2–6; see also *1 En.* 39:3–8; 41:1–2; *2 Bar.* 51:5, 10, 12).⁵⁶

The hymnic eschatological prophecy in *T. Mos.* 10 concludes with a mention of the joy of the exalted Israel which offers thanksgiving to God for its deliverance. The motif of the joy of the saved, which is caused by the punishment inflicted on their enemies, appears in biblical tradition and the literature of the Second Temple period (see, e.g., Isa 66:14; *1 En.* 62:12; *Jub.* 23:30), and according to *1 En.* 97:2, even angels will rejoice at the punishment of sinners.

Conclusions

The document known today as the *Testament of Moses* (formerly: *Assumption of Moses*) is a testament as far as its literary form is concerned. The composition of the entire work – modelled on Deuteronomy – is a farewell speech that Moses addresses to Joshua before the former’s death. The work shows many similarities with Jewish apocalyptic writings of the Second Temple period, especially the group of writings referred to as historical apocalypses (e.g. Dan, *4 Ezra*, *2 Bar.*). Many elements that appear in the *Testament of Moses* are characteristic of apocalyptic writings – terminology, themes, motifs – including (1) the image of God as King and the motif of His kingdom, (2) determinism, (3) the motif of God’s foreknowledge, (4) the question of the cause of the creation of the world, (5) the purifying value of suffering and the voluntary acceptance of martyrdom for the sake of fidelity to God. Particularly noteworthy is the hymnic eschatological prophecy in 10:1–10, where the author refers explicitly to the Book of Daniel (12:1–3). The main theme of the hymn is the establishment of the kingdom of God, the annihilation of evil (i.e. the devil and sorrow) and all the enemies of the chosen people, and the rescue and exaltation of Israel. In *T. Mos.* 10 – as in Dan 12:1–3 – the time of final deliverance will follow a period of distress and persecution, as depicted in the imagery of a variety of cataclysms involving the entire universe. The salvation of God’s faithful defined as their happiness (10:8) becomes the result of God’s own intervention, in which a heavenly being (= Michael) plays an active role, cf. Dan 12:1. The reward and exaltation of God’s faithful are referred to in 10:9, where it is stated that they will become participants in communion with the stars, i.e. heavenly beings, cf. Dan 12:3.

⁵⁶ Cf. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses*, 43; Laperrousaz, “Le Testament de Moïse,” 1012; Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses*, 237.

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