

IV. Judaism

■ Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism ■ Rabbinic Judaism

A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism

Taken together with the prominent genre of visions, auditions were a particular and also very widespread method of divine revelation. Especially in Second Temple Judaism, when an apocalyptic worldview becomes more common and apocalyptic writings are characterized by “lists of revealed things” (Stone), the recipient does not only “see” but also “hears” the hidden divine revelations, despite the fact that most of them are mediated by heavenly figures. In general, auditions and visions testify equally to a strong prophetic influence (cf. Amos 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 9:1; Isa 6:1, 4, 8) within Jewish apocalypticism (cf. *1En.* 1:2; 14:24–15:2; 99:10). The Syriac apocalypse of Baruch (*2Bar.*) even starts in the manner of a prophetic book (*2Bar.* 1:1): “And it happened in the twenty-fifth year of Jeconiah, the king of Judah, that the word of the Lord came to Baruch” (OTP 1.621: Klijn). The text that follows is shaped as an oral revelation from Baruch to the prophet Jeremiah (cf. *2Bar.* 2). The later Greek and Slavonic versions of *3Bar.* combine auditory and visionary elements when the heavenly and divine mysteries are shown and heard by Baruch through the agency of an angel (cf. *3Bar.* 1:7). Furthermore, in *1En.* 1:1–2, an audition introduces the Ethiopic book of *Enoch* as a whole and leads to a universal judgment in vv. 3–9 that includes elements of a theophany (cf. Beyerle 2005). Consequently, it characterizes the whole of the following visions in *1En.* as a divine auditory revelation. A more concrete example occurs in *1En.* 14:24–15:7, when Enoch is asked by the “Holy Ones” to hear what he should declare to the “Watchers” namely judgment for those who bear “Giants” that bring destruction on earth. Audition here also functions as a means of contrasting legitimized revelation

with the rejected secrets of the “Watchers” (cf. *1En.* 16:1–4, and also 106:8–107:3 [appendix]; Beyerle 2007). To sum up, auditory and visionary experiences of the auditor or seer shape the literary concept of apocalyptic writings. This is also true, e.g., in the *Slavonic Book of Enoch*, wherein those “men” who lead Enoch up towards the heavens in order to “show” also “speak” about the different places (cf. *2En.* 7:1 and 8:1 with *2En.* 9).

Audition appears not only in Jewish apocalypses but also in alternative genres, especially those texts that anticipated to some degree the apocalyptic worldview, such as “Testaments.” The *Testament of Abraham*, a Jewish writing from the turn of the era that was adopted by Christians, is a good case in point (cf. *T.Ab.* A 3:3–4; 5:3; 6:1; 7:8; 9:2; 14:2; 15:6, 9; 19:7; B 3:3–4; 7:17; cf. OTP 1.882–902: Sanders). After Abraham meets the archangel Michael incognito, they both approach a magical, i.e., talking, tree that articulates a mystery (quoting Isa 6:3) that Abraham “hears” (*T.Ab.* A; B 3:3–4). The tree apparently prophesies Abraham’s death, but Abraham keeps this knowledge as a mystery before the archangel. Whatever the talking tree indicates (cf. Allison: 107–13), here the human being carries precisely the kind of knowledge that is in other cases revealed only by divine messengers. Later on, the archangel interprets before Abraham a vision of Isaac by using speech (*T.Ab.* A 7:8: “Hear, righteous Abraham!” cf. also 9:2 and the imperative formula in 14:2; 15:6, 9; 19:7; Tob 6:13; *3Bar.* 4:7; 7:2).

At Qumran, the *Damascus Document* combines the revelatory function of audition elements with a vision (CD II, 14–15): “And now, sons, listen to me and I shall open your eyes so that you can see and understand the deeds of God” (García Martínez/Tigchelaar: 553; cf. I:1; II:2). The late Jewish wisdom literature from Qumran uses the formula “listen” to introduce the path of the righteous and the way to (divine) knowledge (cf. 4Q185 1–2 I, 13; 4Q298 1–2 I, 2; 3–4 II, 4; 4Q525 14 II, 18; cf. also 4Q299; 4Q415–18a).

Auditions also play a significant role in the work of Philo of Alexandria. This famous exegete of the Torah starts with Exod 20:18, where “all the people saw thunder and lightning and the sound of the trumpet.” Philo interpreted the *seeing* (MT: רָח, LXX: ὄραω) of “thunder” and “sound” (MT: קול, LXX: φωνή) as a conflation of audition and vision (cf. *Decal.* 46–7; *Migr.* 47; *Mos.* 2.213). Philo argues that the divine voice differs fundamentally from human speech. Consequently, the voice can be *seen* as well as *heard* (*Decal.* 32–5; *Migr.* 52). Between the two means of receiving divine revelation vision and audition, Philo obviously prefers the former (cf. Mayr: 1071–74).

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