

The “Synoptic Apocalypse” (Mt 24–25 Par.) and Its Jewish Source

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Summary

The so-called “Synoptic Apocalypse” is a reworking of a Second Temple period Jewish apocalypse (best preserved in Matthew), whose structure is recoverable from the contents and the order of Jesus’ parables.

Keywords

“Synoptic Apocalypse” – Jewish source for “Synoptic Apocalypse” – Matthew – Synoptic Gospels – Second Temple Judaism – liturgical calendar

1 Introduction

The “Synoptic Apocalypse” (SA) is a modern title for the apocalyptic material contained in the Synoptic gospels. The title implies that this material goes back to a common source. The same source was used in other early Christian works, namely, the Revelation of John,¹ 1 Thess 4–5,² the *Apocalypsis*

1 R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John with Introduction, Notes, and Indices also the Greek Text and English Translation*, 2 vols. (The International Critical Commentary), New York, 1920, vol. I, pp. lxxv–lxxvi, lxxxiii–lxxxvi *et passim*. Charles, however, does not discuss any source beyond the synoptic Gospels and 1 Thess but considers the Book of Revelation as depending on these NT sources.

2 M.D. Goulder, *The Evangelists’ Calendar. A Lectionary Explanation of the Development of Scripture*, London, 1978, pp. 237–240; cf. later A. McNicol, *Jesus’ Directions for the Future: A Source and Redaction-History of the Use of the Eschatological Traditions in Paul and in the*

Petri,³ the *Epistula Apostolorum* (s. below), and some others.⁴ The latest of these texts are datable to the early second century (most certainly the *Epistula Apostolorum*). The dates of all others are highly disputable but the same date of the early second century is the latest among those in consideration. Even the eschatological material of the Pauline 1 Thess (ch. 4–5) is discussed as a probably post-Pauline interpolation. Be this as it may, I mention here these problems of dating with the only purpose to show that the similarities between the gospels and other early Christian works are not necessarily to be explained through the dependency of the latter from the former.

The most complete recension of SA is that of Matthew. Without touching the problem of either “Markan” or “Matthean” priority, I consider convincing Hermann Detering’s argumentation for the dependency of the Markan recension of SA from the Matthean one (regardless of mutual relations between these gospels in general).⁵

2 The Order of the Parables

In the present study I would like to make a point that the order of the parables in Matthew is not arbitrary. All the currently available approaches to SA do not consider the possible meaning of the parables’ order itself,⁶ which is equal to the tacit supposition that it is arbitrary.

Synoptic Accounts of Jesus’ Last Eschatological Discourse (New Gospel Studies, 9), Macon, GA, 1996. For a detailed bibliographical survey, s. D. Luckensmeyer, *The Eschatology of First Thessalonians* (Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus, 71), Göttingen, 2009.

- 3 L. Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*, Leiden, 1970, p. 44. E. Tigchelaar, “Is the Liar Bar Kokhba? Considering the Date and Provenance of the Greek (Ethiopic) *Apocalypse of Peter*,” in: *The Apocalypse of Peter*, ed. J.N. Bremmer, I. Czachesz (Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha, 7), Leuven, 2003, pp. 63–77, argued against a hypothesis (especially articulated by Richard Bauckham) implying that the *Apocalypse of Peter* is dependent on Matthew.
- 4 The parallels from the Gospel of Hebrews preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea are late and secondary; cf. A.F.J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (Suppl VC), 17), Leiden etc., 1992, pp. 60–62. The Gospel of Thomas, regardless of its somewhat disputed origin, is mostly in agreement with Luke and so, is not of much help for understanding SA.
- 5 H. Detering, “The Synoptic Apocalypse (Mark 13 par): A Document from the Time of Bar Kokhba,” *Journal of Higher Criticism*, 7 (2000), pp. 161–210.
- 6 Cf., for the *status quaestionis*, J. Dupont, *Les trois apocalypses synoptiques. Marc 13 ; Matthieu 24–25 ; Luc 21* (Lectio divina, 121), Paris, 1985; J. Liebenberg, *The Language of the Kingdom and Jesus. Parable, Aphorism, and Metaphor in the Sayings Material Common to the Synoptic Tradition and the Gospel of Thomas* (Beihefte zur ZNW, 102), Berlin – New York, 2001.

The order of parables in SA follows the standard consequence of the Jewish pentecontad calendars of the Second Temple period. However, this is not because SA is a liturgical text. It is because it follows the pattern common to many Jewish Second Temple apocalypses, where the portions/séances of revelation are distributed according to some calendrical scheme. Each scene of revelation corresponds to some important day or period of liturgical calendar. Its symbolism is always interwoven with the corresponding liturgical symbolism as it is known from the properly liturgical or paraliturgical sources.

I think that the calendrical scheme of SA does not follow any other known Jewish apocalypse but, nevertheless, it has much in common with those of 2 *Baruch* and 4 *Ezra* in its initial part and 3 *Baruch* in its final part. It follows the liturgical calendar whose main feasts are arranged according to the pentecontad scheme best known from the Qumranic *Temple Scroll* (second cent. BC). Its slight deviations from this scheme are also attested to in the Second Temple period Jewish calendars. This scheme includes the following major feasts: the Weeks (Pentecost), the New Wine (second Pentecost), the New Oil (third Pentecost), the preparatory days for the Day of Atonement (ten- or eight-day period from either 1.VII or 3.VII to 10.VII) with the Day of Atonement itself (10.VII).

It would be easier to us to pursuit this scheme backwards, starting from the Day of Atonement and the parable about the Judgement (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Contents	Matthew	Luke	Mark	Other Christian (and pre-Christian) sources	The earliest preserved form is in...
Days of Noah (Mt//Lk) and of Lot (Lk)	24:37–42	17:26–33	–		Lk?
“On that night”: “one bed” (Lk), “grinding together” (Mt//Lk), “in the field” (Mt)		17:34–35	13:33–35	EvThom 61 (“one bed”).	Lk (without interpolated 17:36)
Γρηγορείτε οὖν ... (in the context of the guard against the thief).	24:42	–		1 Thes 5:1–5; Rev 3:3; 16:15; EvThom 21; 103.	Mt
Owner of the House and Thief	24:43–44	12:39–40			Mt
Good and Wicked Slaves	24:45–51	12:41–46	–	1 Thes 5:6–8; EvHeb (Eus EH 4:12)	Partially in Mt//Lk and partially in 1 Thess.

TABLE 1 (cont.)

Contents	Matthew	Luke	Mark	Other Christian (and pre-Christian) sources	The earliest preserved form is in...
Ten Virgins	25:1–13	–	–	EpAp 43–45; Did 16:1; witnesses of the watching wise virgins	EpAp
Talents	25:14–30	19:11–27	–	EvHeb (Eus EH 4:12); EvThom 41; 2 Clem 8:5–6	?
Judgement: Sheep and Goats	25:31–46	–	–	[Ez 34:17; 1 En 89–90 (sheep)]	Mt

Non-Standard Abbreviations: Did – *Didache*; EpAp – *Epistula Apostolorum*; Eus EH – Eusebius of Caesarea, *The History of the Church*; EvHeb – Gospel of Hebrews; EvThom – Gospel of Thomas.

3 The Day of Atonement and the “Ten Days of Repentance”/ Fast of Gedaliah

The last Matthean parable is explicitly referring to the last judgement. The scholarly consensus⁷ acknowledges that it goes back to some written source earlier than the Gospel, but denies that this document was Jewish (one of the dissident voices is, however, Rudolf Bultmann with his opinion that this document was, indeed, Jewish).⁸ Nobody, as far as I know, has taken a further step in interpreting the whole scene of judgement as an eschatological Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). It is understandable because the parable of ship and goats does not contain any mention of the specific rites of Yom Kippur as described in Leviticus or rabbinical texts.

⁷ When referring to the “scholarly consensus” I mean, here and below, the standard explanations accepted by the most of the scholars. S., for the relevant bibliography, any of the detailed commentaries on the synoptic Gospels, especially on the Gospel of Matthew, such as, e.g., by U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, III (Mt 18–25) (Evangelisch Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, I/3), Zürich – Braunschweig – Neukirchen – Vluyn, 1997.

⁸ R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*. Zweite neubearbeitete Aufl., Göttingen, 1931, S. 131–133.

To recognise the Day of Atonement in this parable, we have to compare it with the eschatological Yom Kippur before the Holy of Holies of the heavenly Temple. The main idea of this ceremony is already explicit in Ez 34:17 "I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats," which is a well-known remote background of our parable. The sheep as a symbol of the righteous who are the true Israel is an important symbol in the Enochic "Animal Apocalypse" (1 En 89–90).⁹

A closer parallel is to be found in the so-called Greek-Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch (3 *Baruch*),¹⁰ roughly contemporaneous to the Gospel of Matthew. The parallelism encompasses the scenes that precede the Day of Atonement in both texts. The Byzantine editors of 3 *Baruch* have already noticed the similarity between the corresponding scenes, which resulted in an interpolation from Mt 25:21, 23 in 3 *Baruch* 15:4G and an allusion to Mt 25:24, 26 in 3 *Baruch* 15:2G (both verses are absent from the Slavonic version of 3 *Baruch*).¹¹

In 3 *Baruch* (chs. 11–16), the Judgement is performed by Michael (who is there a divine figure and the priest of the heavenly Temple, very similar to the Son of Man in Matthew and not an angelic being) who distributes oil to the righteous ones and locusts to the wicked ones. The oil here is a remnant of an earlier great festival of the New Oil, which is, in the liturgical calendar of 3 *Baruch*, already absorbed by the Day of Atonement.¹² A trend toward assimilation of the New Oil festival by the Day of Atonement is already traceable even in the Qumranic *Temple Scroll*.¹³ Taken this innovation of 3 *Baruch* aside, the scene of judgment presents the divine heavenly priest who separates the righteous ones and the wicked ones. 3 *Baruch*, whose original language was, most

9 Cf. a detailed study by D. Assefa, *L'apocalypse des animaux (1 Hen 85–90) : une propagande militaire? : approches narrative, historico-critique, perspectives théologiques* (Supplements to JSJ, 120), Leiden – Boston, 2007.

10 The two Greek manuscripts of 3 *Baruch* represent a later recension than that of the five Slavonic manuscripts. The latter, however, is already distinct from the *Urtext*. For a synoptic translation and analysis of both recensions and recovering of the *Urtext*, s. A. Kulik, 3 *Baruch. Greek-Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature), Berlin – New York, 2010.

11 Kulik, 3 *Baruch*, pp. 371–372, 379.

12 For the analysis of 3 *Baruch*'s liturgical calendar, s. B. Lourié, "Cosmology and Liturgical Calendar in 3 *Baruch* and Their Mesopotamian Background," in: *H. Gaylord Memorial Volume* [provisional title], ed. A. Kulik, A. Orlov (Studia Judaeoslavica), Leiden (forthcoming).

13 Cf. J. Milgrom, "Further Studies in the Temple Scroll," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, NS, 71 (1980), pp. 1–17, here 15–16 (the purgation offering bull for the New Oil festival "should be wholly burned" according to *Temple Scroll* 22:4).

probably, Greek, implies here the wordplay ἔλεος “mercy” / ἔλαιον “oil,” whereas the idea of mercy is also the main principle of judgment in Matthew.

In the modern Jewish calendar, the Day of Atonement is preceded with the “Ten Days of Repentance” (*Aseret Yemai Teshuvah*) beginning at the New Year day on 1.VII. Among these days, 3.VII is of special importance as the one-day Fast of Gedaliah, the last righteous governor of Judah before the destruction of the first temple (2 Kgs 25:25–26 and Jer 41). This practice amalgamates two different practices of the Second Temple period where the number of preparatory days together with the Day of Atonement itself was either ten or eight. This period was interpreted, moreover, as the multi-day consecration feast of the second temple (eight days in 3 *Baruch* but ten days in 4 *Baruch* = *Paraleipomena Ieremiae*).¹⁴

In 3 *Baruch*, during these preparatory days, the angels bring to the heavenly temple the baskets of flowers representing the good deeds of righteous but they have nothing to bring from the wicked ones.

The structure of this scene with flowers has striking similarity with the previous parable of Matthew, that of the talents. This parable is also presented in Luke, although the “talents” are replaced with “pounds” (μνᾶ = 1/60 of τάλαντον). All these objects, within the preparation period of the Day of Atonement, are an equivalent of the chieftains’ gifts (Numb 7) which were presented during twelve days in Nisan as a part of the consecration ceremony of the Tabernacle.¹⁵ The ten-day consecration ceremony of the Second Temple, according to 4 *Baruch* 9:1–2, took place in Tishri with a culmination at the Day of Atonement,¹⁶ and, finally, 3 *Baruch* moves this ceremony in the space to the Heavenly Tabernacle but preserves at the same place in the time.¹⁷ – This is an explanation why the parable corresponding to the preparatory days for the Day of Atonement deals with some kind of gifts.

For the comparison of the calendrical structure, it is only the quantity of the symbolical objects that matters, not their “quality.” It is not important whether we are counting baskets of flowers, talents, or pounds. Important is the numerical scheme to what they are mapped. Thus, in 3 *Baruch*, we have an imprecise number of the baskets of flowers distributed during eight days; in

14 Lourié, “Cosmology.”

15 Cf. J. Milgrom, “The Chieftains’ Gifts: Numbers, Chapter 7,” *Hebrew Annual Review*, 9 (1985), pp. 221–225.

16 Cf., for the context, J. Herzer, 4 *Baruch* (*Paraleipomena Jeremiou*) *Translated with an Introduction and Commentary* (SBL. Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 22), Atlanta, GA, 2005, pp. 32/33–34/35 (Greek/English).

17 Lourié, “Cosmology.”

Matthews, we have eight talents in sum (five plus two plus one); in Luke, we have ten pounds. In all these three cases, the quantified items symbolise criteria for the judgement. In this way, all these scenes are preparatory for the next scene of the judgement itself (although the latter is absent from the Lukan – abridged and rearranged – recension of our apocalypse).

The difference between Matthew and Luke in numbers, eight or ten, reflects a difference between the corresponding calendrical traditions, which are both old enough. It is therefore difficult to decide which of the two numbers is genuine, eight or ten. In some sense, genuine are both.

4 The New Oil Festival

If we accept the general idea that the parables of Matthew could be interpreted against the background of a liturgical calendar, the link between the parable of the Ten Virgins and the festival of the New Oil appears immediately.

The contents of the parable (focused on the oil in the lamps) and its place in the consequence of the parables in Matthew fits perfectly with the calendrical scheme where the major festivity preceding the preparatory days for the Day of Atonement is the New Oil festival. This is not exactly the scheme of the *Temple Scroll* where several days after the New Oil and before 1.VII are occupied by the multi-day festival of *Xylophoria* (known also from Flavius Josephus and 4Q365).¹⁸ However, this is, e. g., the scheme of the Second Temple Jewish calendar recoverable from the *Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath* by the Ethiopian Beta-Israel (Falasha).¹⁹ Anyway, the *Xylophoria* was rather a minor feast, which is never attested to in the symbolism of the apocalypses.

The major problem, from the "calendrical" point of view, is related to the concluding verse (Mt 25:13): "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Such a conclusion apparently contradicts to the statement that *all* virgins fell asleep (Mt 25:5). There is a consensus among the scholars, albeit incomplete, that this phrase is an interpolation, and the parable ends at

18 On this feast, the most comprehensive study is now that of C. Werman, "The Wood-Offering: The Convolution of a Halakah in Qumran and Rabbinic Law," in: *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9–11 January, 2005*, ed. E.G. Chazon, B. Halpern-Amaru, and R. Clements (Studies on the texts of the Desert of Judah, 88), Leiden, 2010, pp. 151–182.

19 See B. Lourié, "A 364-Day Calendar Encapsulated in the *Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath* of the Beta Israel of Ethiopia," in: *Studies in Ethiopian Languages, Literature, and History, Presented to Getatchew Haile by His Friends and Colleagues*, ed. A. McCollum Wiesbaden (in print)

v. 12. This opinion is now founded on the authority of Joachim Jeremias (1947).²⁰ Some “dissident” voices are rather feeble: “a) « veiller » est en rapport avec « être préparé » et non avec « ne pas dormir » ; b) « veiller » indique une attitude morale qui définit globalement le temps présent.”²¹

I think that a better explanation provides another variant of this parable known not only from the *Epistula Apostolorum* and the *Corpus Macarianum* but also from a great number of early Christian texts (including the 3rd-cent. *Martyrdom of Pionius*), the early ascetical literature throughout the Christian East and West (including Pachomius and Orsiesius in Coptic, Aphraat in Syriac, Jerome in Latin...), and Byzantine (including Palestinian) pieces of hymnography.²² In this variant, wise virgins, unlike foolish ones, did not sleep. Such an omnipresence of this variant throughout the East and West points to a very

20 J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Kurzausgabe, 9. Aufl.), Göttingen, 1984, S. 35. For more bibliography, s., e. g., A.J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus. A Commentary* (The Bible in Its World), Cambridge, 2000, p. 175.

21 A. Puig i Tàrrach, *La parable des dix vierges* (Analecta biblica, 102; Col·lectània Sant Pacià, 28), Rome, 1983, 95.

22 В.М. Лурье, “Из Иерусалима в Аксум через Храм Соломона: архаичные предания о Сионе и Ковчеге Завета в составе *Кебра Негест* и их трансляция через Константинополь” [B. Lourié, “From Jerusalem to Aksum through the Temple of Solomon: Archaic Traditions about Zion and the Ark of Covenant in the *Kebra Nägäst* and Their Translation via Constantinople”], *Христианский Восток*, 2 (8) (2000), pp. 137–207, here 175; idem, “Чаша Соломона и скиния на Сионе. Часть 1. Надпись на Чаше Соломона: текст и контекст” [“The Chalice of Solomon and the Tabernacle on Zion. Part 1: The Inscription on the Chalice of Solomon: Text and Context”], *Византиноведение / Byzantinorossica*, 3 (2005), pp. 8–74, here 35; cf. the most detailed dossier (in Russian) in B. Lourié, Endnote 505 to Macarius the Great, *Collection I*, sermon 49.2.1 (= II, 4, 6), in: Sancti Patris Nostri Macarii Aegyptii (Symeonis Mesopotamitae) *Sermones ascetici et epistulae Collectio I, Textus Graecus integer receptus cum versione Rossica atque excerpta Graeca nunc primum edita cum variis lectionibus e codicibus Graecis et Syriacis*, ed. A. Danuvius, V. Desprez, M. Bernarius, S. Kim, St. Mountain Athos – Moscow, 2015, pp. 727–729. The reference to Jerome is *Adv. Jovinianum* II; *PL* 23, col. 322. I owe the latter reference to Peter Dronke’s study of the Latin/Old French bilingual liturgical drama *Sponsus* (ca 1050/1060), where the vigilance of the wise virgins is the leitmotiv: the refrains of most stanzas are either *Gaire noi dormet!* (“Don’t fall asleep”) or *Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!* (“We, wretched in our grief, have slept too long!”), the very first verses are *Adest sponsus qui est Christus – vigilate, virgines!*, and, finally, the foolish virgins say (vv. 54–55): *A misere, nos hic quid facimus? / vigilare nimquid potuimus?* (“Ah what are we doing here, in our pitiful state? / Could we not, after all, have stayed awake?”). Dronke adds as well a parallel motive from the Middle High German late 13th-cent. play, the so-called *Eisenacher Zehnjung-frauenspiel* (also known under the Latin title *Ludus de decem virginibus*). See P. Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays* (Cambridge medieval classics, 1), Cambridge, 1994, pp. 3–23.

early and highly authoritative Christian tradition. Even the influence of the Gospel of Matthew was not enough to conceal it.

The value of this variant is underestimated in the New Testament scholarship, I think, due to the two reasons: (1) until the 1970s, the *Epistola Apostolorum* was normally dated to the middle of the second century, whereas its more correct date is the early second century,²³ overlapping with the possible temporal interval of the final editing of the Gospel of Matthew; (2) other witnesses of the tradition of watching virgins are mostly ignored on the pretext of their relatively late date and without taking into account their extremely large geography.

In the presence of the *Epistula Apostolorum* and other Christian witnesses of the tradition of watching virgins it would be only natural to consider the verse Mt 25:13 as a remnant of an earlier recension of the parable, where not all the virgins fell asleep but only the foolish ones.

This conclusion is additionally corroborated with the parallel from *Didache* 16:1: Γρηγορεῖτε ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς ὑμῶν. οἱ λύχνοι ὑμῶν μὴ σβεσθήτωσαν, καὶ αἱ ὀσφύες ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκλυέσθωσαν, ἀλλὰ γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι· οὐ γὰρ οἴδατε τὴν ὥραν, ἐν ᾗ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν ἔρχεται ("Watch over your life. Let your lamps not go out and let your loins not be ungirded but be ready, for you do not know the hour at which our Lord is coming"; underlined are the words exactly coinciding with Mt 24:42/25:13). The lamps that could go out mentioned here are a recognisable feature of our parable on the virgins. This feature is interwoven with the exact quotation of the words known to us from Mt 25:13. If the *Didache* is not depending on Matthew (which is the opinion shared by many scholars, even though not a consensus), we have here an independent witness of the original unity between Mt 25:13 and the parable of the virgins.

Let us add some words on the parallels between *Didache* 16 and Matthew. Alan J.P. Garrow considers most of ch. 16 as belonging to the earliest layer of the *Didache*, but the verses 16:1–2 are, according to him, an original creation of the author, whereas the verses 16:3–6, 8–9 are an addition from some self-standing apocalypse. Indeed, the scholars of the *Didache* have noticed a break between 16:2 and 16:3. Already Garrow concluded that the opinion that:

...both parts [*sc.*, 16:1–2 and 16:3–6, 8–9. – *B. L.*] were added to the *Didache* at the same time, is the most satisfactory. In this case *Did.* 16.3–6, 8–9 may be seen as a separately existing eschatological discourse which was quoted by the author of *Did.* 16.1–2 as a means of concluding the whole

23 M. Hornschuh, *Studien zur Epistula Apostolorum* (Patristische Texte und Studien, 5), Berlin, 1965. Cf. now J.V. Hills, *The Epistle of the Apostles* (Early Christian Apocrypha, 2), Santa Rosa, CA, 2009.

text. The message of 16.1–2 may be summed up as a call to constant vigilance in preparation for the final judgement, a message that is consistently reinforced by the quotation of 16.3–6, 8–9.²⁴

As Garrow convincingly argued in his monograph, the common opinion that the *Didache* is posterior to Matthew is unfounded and simply erroneous, whereas this opinion is always present in the argumentation of those who insist on a dependence of both *Didache* and Matthew from a common source. Thus, if the *Didache* 16:3–6, 8–9 is earlier than Matthew, “...the introduction of further hypothetical entities is unnecessary. Not only that, but it is extremely difficult to reconstruct a suitable tradition/source for such a role.”²⁵ In my opinion, SA is, indeed, the suitable source in question.²⁶ The break between 16:2 and 16:3 is to be explained as a seam between different parts of SA used by the Didachist.

In his later study Garrow argues that the eschatological tradition in 1 Thess could go back to *Didache* 16:1–6, 8–9 (without putting aside 16:1–2).²⁷ It is hardly very likely, given that the overlapping between 1 Thess and SA is much wider than between 1 Thess and the *Didache*.²⁸ The data analysed by Garrow could be most naturally understood as demonstrating the existence of a common source shared by 1 Thess with *Didache* 16 (but without separation between 16:1–2 and 16:3–6, 8–9), which, in turn, could be nothing other than SA.

The parable of the virgins in the form where the virgins were watching and not sleeping fits into common pattern of the pentecostal feasts with their culmination at the all-night vigil. We will return to this pattern in the discussion of the night of the first Pentecost.

24 A.J.P. Garrow, *The Gospel of Matthew's Dependence on the Didache* (JSNT SS, 254), London – New York, 2004, pp. 65–66, quoted p. 66; cf. pp. 190–216 for author's view on the direct dependence of Mt 24 on *Did.* 16.

25 Garrow, *The Gospel of Matthew's Dependence*, pp. 214–215.

26 I basically agree with Stephen E. Young's conclusion: “If the *Didache* and Matthew grew out of a closely related milieu, a shared background and overall commonality of tradition and idiom better explain the resemblances between them than does a theory of literary dependence” (*Jesus Tradition in Apostolic Fathers: Their Explicit Appeals to the Words of Jesus in the Light of Orality Studies* (WUNT, 11.311), Tübingen, 2011, p. 213 *et passim*). Cf. also, for the Jewish background of the *Didache*, M. Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism: Jewish Roots of an Ancient Christian-Jewish Work*, New York – London, 2004, esp. pp. 221–262 (on Jewish traditions behind *Did.* 16).

27 A.J.P. Garrow, “The Eschatological Tradition behind 1 Thessalonians: *Didache* 16,” *JSNT*, 32 (2009), pp. 191–215.

28 S. fn 2 above.

The destiny of the New Oil festival was complicated. On one hand, this feast has evolved as the third replica of the festival of the Weeks (the first Pentecost) within the 364-day year calendar. On the other hand, it turned out to be in the strong gravitation field of the Day of Atonement, one of the two principal *Jahrespunkte* of the Jewish liturgical year in any calendrical scheme. Thus, the New Oil feast was not a very stable formation, and the number of sources where it is described is very limited. All available sources are Jewish. In Qumran, apart from the *Temple Scroll*, the feast is witnessed by 4Q394 = 4QMMT^a (and, with some probability, by 4Q327).²⁹ Outside Qumran, it is recoverable in the reconstructed Jewish calendar of the Ethiopian Beta Israel's *The Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath*.³⁰ As far as I know, in a sharp contrast with the second pentecontad feast (New Wine), this feast has never been preserved in Christian liturgical traditions. Instead, we have a very early Christian tradition of liturgical commemoration of the whole of Jesus' Mt Olivet discourse on Tuesday of the Passion Week.

The apocalyptic reflexion of the New Oil feast in SA provides some important liturgical data, but they are relevant to the *Sitz im Leben* of SA rather than that of the Gospel of Matthew.

The feast as it could be seen through Mt 25:1–13 is heavily influenced by the Day of Atonement. Its parable also refers to the judgement as a separation of righteous from unrighteous. The symbolism of oil is a very common representation of mercy, which is the most important among the criteria of judgement according to the parable on sheep and goats. Finally, the total number of the virgins, ten, seems to be alluding to the date of 10 Tishri.

5 The New Wine Festival

The parable of good and wicked slaves describes the behaviour of the wicked slave in a characteristic way: "But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards" (Mt 24:48–49). Luke makes the same accent on drunkenness: "But and if that servant... shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to

29 Cf. S. Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations in Second Temple Judaism. New Perspectives on the 'Date of the Last Supper' Debate* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 159), Leiden – Boston, 2012, pp. 134–135; cf. also M.M. Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture. Composition and Exegesis in the 4Q Reworked Pentateuch Manuscripts* (STDJ, 95), Leiden – Boston, 2011, pp. 99–111.

30 Lourié, "A 364-Day Calendar Encapsulated."

eat and drink, and to be drunk” (Lk 12:45). Neither Matthew nor Luke mentions the nighttime. However, with the help of the parallel place 1 Thess 5:7–8 – another document going back to our SA (an interpolation in the genuine Pauline letter) – this omission could be restored: “For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

The modern exegetes pay little attention to the fact that the behaviour of the wicked servant is featured through the notion of drunkenness³¹. This fact is, however, of fundamental importance.

The theme of drunkenness is to be read as an explicit reference to the New Wine festival imagery. Unlike the *Temple Scroll* where the New Wine is mainly the festival of first fruits, in later 3 *Baruch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,³² as well as in the calendar of *The Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath* the symbolical imagery of this feast is related to the danger of drunkenness. 3 *Baruch* elaborates on this in a great extent providing a vision where the Tree of Knowledge is the tree of vine planted by Satanael, and the whole history of the Fall is explained through the misuse of wine (4:7–8 in Slavonic; Sammael in Greek). The same imagery is shared and enforced in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (where, according to my reconstruction, a complete rite of the Day of Atonement is performed on the date of the New Wine feast, but the original features of this feast are partially preserved). 2 *Baruch* 36:1sqq also contains a vision of the vine as the tree of Eden. In all these texts the feast of New Wine was reconsidered as a commemoration of the Fall of Adam and Eve, where the tree of vine that grew up from Satan’s seed was involved. It is also, of course, a commemoration of the two judgements, the one performed on the progenitors in Eden and another one to be performed at the end of the history.

As a pentecostad festival, the New Wine presupposes a vigil. This corresponding material of SA is preserved by 1 Thess only. The rite itself which, most probably, included an expiatory cup of wine, is recoverable from some other

31 Cf., e. g., the treatment by U. Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary* (Hermeneia), Minneapolis, MN, 2005, p. 224]: “It is conceivable that the verb ‘be drunk’ (μεθύω) made many readers think of experiences in their own lives. ‘To be drunk’ need not be understood literally; symbolically it refers to the lifestyle of the godless at night in contrast of ‘being sober’...” I would like to demonstrate that, quite contrary, the mention of drunkenness needs to be understood in the literal meaning – within a symbolism, of course, but this symbolism is liturgical (related to the New Wine festival).

32 Lourié, “Cosmology,” Appendix containing a reconstruction of the liturgical calendar implied in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.

texts (4 *Ezra* 14, 3 *Maccabees*,³³ Greek-Slavonic *Inscription on the Chalice of Solomon*³⁴...) but could not be discussed here because it has no trace in our sources going back to SA. Maybe, however, that the rite implied in SA was similar to the all-night vigil of the pentecontad festivals (the feast celebrated at the end of the every seventh week throughout the whole year) in the communities of the *therapeutae* described by Philo in his *De vita contemplativa*, 89: the meal at these συμπόσια was ascetical and without wine, but the reading of scriptures and the prayers resulted in "a beautiful drunkenness" (μεθυσθέντες οὖν ἄχρι πρωΐας τὴν καλὴν ταύτην μέθην – "thus they continue till dawn, drunk with this beautiful drunkenness").³⁵

6 The Pentecost: the Night of the Coming of the Son of Man

Going backwards from the last parable (sheep and goats) to the first (good and wicked slaves) we have now the list of the parables *sensu proprio* exhausted. We have approached the series of short examples (Mt 24:36–42 // Lk 17:26–35) illustrating "the coming of the Son of Man." These series are divided into two parts. The first part is referring to Noah (in Luke, to Noah and Lot: Mt 24:36–39 // Lk 17:26–33).

The second part (Mt 24:40–42 // Lk 17:34–35 // Mk 13:33–35) is, in turn, a series of different examples related to "that night" (Lk 17:36 being an interpolation from Mt in a part of the manuscript tradition).

I follow August Strobel's authoritative analysis³⁶ demonstrating that the recension of Lk 17:34–35 ("I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken and the other left") and not the recension of Mt 24:40–41 ("Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left") is the genuine one. The grinding women are not less characteristic for the nighttime than the sleeping men, because the grinding was women's late evening or early morning activity. As Strobel said, "Noch heute mahlen die Frauen

33 B. Lourié, "Cup of Salvation": Liturgical Calendar in 3 *Maccabees*" (forthcoming).

34 S., for the time being, Лурье, "Чаша Соломона." I am now preparing a new study on this text taking into account new sources (two Latin manuscripts found by A. Temchin) and providing a somewhat new interpretation.

35 F.H. Colson, Philo *with an English translation*, vol. 9 (LCL), London – Cambridge, MA, 1954, p. 166/167 (Greek/English translation, which is slightly less literal than the mine). Cf. *ibid.*, 42 (p. 138/139), on the drunkenness of the Greeks in the nighttime.

36 A. Strobel, "In dieser Nacht (Luk 17, 34): Zu einer älteren Form der Erwartung in Luk 17, 20–37," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 58 (1961), S. 16–29.

in Palästina in der Regel vor Sonnenaufgang das Korn."³⁷ Thus, all these examples are pointing out the nighttime.

However, what is the night that is meant? Strobel's answer (shared by many scholars after him) is that this is the night of Passover.³⁸ Indeed, there is an early Christian tradition of waiting for the Second Coming at the Easter night. It had certainly some Jewish roots, even though is directly traceable only since the fourth century. Strobel rightly observed that it is this tradition that resulted in the almost universal Christian custom of appointing on the Great Tuesday the reading of the Olivet discourse. However, dealing with the Gospels and their sources, Strobel and those who followed him have overlooked a delicate matter, namely, the necessity of discerning between Passover/Easter and Pentecost. Both feasts belong to the same most festal period of the year as its beginning and end, respectively. It is always difficult to discern between them, especially in Christianity where the Passover Lamb has already become as well the Pentecostal sacrifice of the Covenant (cf. Heb 13:20).³⁹ To my knowledge, this problem has never been addressed in relation to Mt 24:36–42 // Lk 17:26–35.

The waiting for the Second Coming of Christ at the night of Pentecost is attested to as early as by Tertullian (*De baptismo* 19:2).⁴⁰ This quotation (s. Table 2) is also interesting as a witness of an early Christian reconsideration of a most authoritative Jewish text appointing the final salvation at the day of Passover, the Septuagint of Jeremiah (that differs from the Hebrew text).

Any translation of "*qui est proprie dies festus*" would be here disputable and conjectural, but, be this as it may, Tertullian clearly expresses here his belief in the tradition of waiting for the Second Coming at Pentecost.

The most important Jewish antecedent of the Messiah arriving at Pentecost is, to my knowledge, *2 Enoch* (an Alexandrian Jewish text preserved in Slavonic and partially in Coptic roughly contemporaneous to the gospels). Like Jesus but unlike all other Jewish messianic figures, Enoch arrives twice, both times at Pentecost.⁴¹

37 Strobel, "In dieser Nacht," S. 21.

38 Strobel, "In dieser Nacht," S. cf. idem, "Die Passa-Erwartung als urchristliches Problem in Lc 17, 20f.," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 49 (1958), pp. 157–196; idem, "Zum Verständnis von Mt 25, 1–13," *NT*, 2 (1958), pp. 199–227.

39 Cf. B. Lourié, "Calendrical Implications in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*: Seven questions concerning the liturgy of the Sabbath rest," *Revue biblique*, 115 (2008), pp. 245–265.

40 E. Evans, *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism. The Text Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, London, 1964, p. 42/43 (txt/tr.).

41 Cf. B. Lourié, "Calendrical Elements in *2 Enoch*," in: *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch. No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. A. Orlov, G. Boccaccini, assoc. ed. J.M. Zurawski (Studia Judaeoslavica, 4), Leiden – Boston, 2012, pp. 191–219.

TABLE 2

exinde pentecoste ordinandis lavacris laetissimum spatium est, quo et domini resurrectionis inter discipulos frequentata est et gratia spiritus sancti dedicata et spes adventus domini subostensa, quod tunc in caelos recuperato eo angeli ad apostolos dixerunt sic venturum quemadmodum et in caelos conscendit, utique in pentecoste. sedenim Hieremias cum dicit, *Et congregabo illos ab extremis terrae in die festo paschae* [Hierem. 38:7 LXX], diem significat et pentecostes, qui est proprie dies festus.

Pentecost is a most auspicious period for arranging baptisms, for during it our Lord's resurrection was several times made known among the disciples, and the grace of the Holy Spirit first given, and the hope of our Lord's coming made evident: because it was at that time, when he had been received back into heaven, that angels said to the apostles that he would so come in like manner as he had also gone up into heaven, namely, at Pentecost. Moreover when Jeremiah says, *And I will gather them together from the ends of the earth on the festal day of Passover*, he also indicates the day of Pentecost, which is in a special sense a festal day.

To our purpose, a special importance has the witness of the *Epistula Apostolorum* (17:2): not only because of its early date but, first of all, because its connexion to SA. The available textual evidence is the following [in Table 3 below I provide the most important variant reading only – without the indirect tradition in Ethiopic within the works of Emperor Zara Yaqob (1434–1468);⁴² but these data do not affect my conclusion below].

The reversed order of the feasts of Pentecost and Passover/Unleavened Bread would suggest that the latter is a later addition. Moreover, Ethiopic ሰዎዋዕል: (literally “days”) normally serves as a rendering of Greek σὺν/ἐν καιρῷ.⁴³ Therefore, I suggest that the genuine reading of the *Epistula Apostolorum* is to be reconstructed as *σὺν/ἐν καιρῷ τῆς πεντεκοστῆς. Even if I am wrong here, a special importance of Pentecost for the date of the Second Coming is obvious in our text.

Therefore, we have to be open towards the possibility that the series of examples we are dealing with are related to Pentecost rather than Passover. This possibility is enforced by our explanation of the parables' order in Matthew: indeed, here is the right place for Pentecost and not for Passover.

42 Quoted by him twice in his *Book of Nativity*, homily on the (monthly celebration of the) Nativity of Christ on 29 Naḥase (3 Sept.): K. Wendt, *Das Maṣḥafa Milād (Liber Nativitatis) und Maṣḥafa Sellāsē (Liber Trinitatis) des Kaisers Zar'a Yā'qob*, II (CSCO, 235–236; Aeth., 43–44), Louvain, 1963, pp. 30/26, 31/28 (txt/tr.); the first instance is a witness of the reading “in the days of,” whereas the second one of the reading “between.”

43 A. Dillmann, *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae*, Leipzig, 1865, col. 925.

TABLE 3

Ethiopic⁴⁴

አመ : መዋዕለ : [AC ምእከለ :] ጳጳስቴሰጤ : ወፋሲካ :

in the days of [or time of / σὺν/έν καιρῶ] [mss AC: between] Pentecost and Passover

Achmimic Coptic⁴⁵

ἸΤΜΗΤΕ ἸΤΠΕΝΤΗΚΟΣΤΗ ΜἸ ΠΡΔΕ ἸΠΑΤΣΕΡΕ ΣΙΑΞΩΠΕ

between Pentecost (πεντεκοστη) and the feast of Unleavened (Bread)

Latin⁴⁶

inter pentecosten et azyma

between Pentecost and (the feast of) Unleavened (Bread)

The decisive argument would follow from the analysis of the example of the owner of house and thief (Mt 24:43–44 // Lk 12:39–40) equally referred to in 1 Thess 5:1–5 (a part of the long interpolation). The witness of 1 Thess is especially important to us because here, like in Matthew and Luke, the example of the thief is followed with an allusion to the parable of wicked slave.

The imagery of the house that could be “broken into” in the immediate context of an all-night vigil and within a larger context of Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism brings to mind the imagery of the later Jewish custom of *tiqqun leyl Shavu'ot* (תיקון ליל שבועות), literally “Rectification for Shavuot Night” – the study of Scriptures during the night of Pentecost. The earliest available Jewish text elaborating on this topic is the *Zohar* (13th cent.), but this book continued

44 L. Guerriet, avec le concours de S. Grébaud, “Le Testament en Galilée de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ,” PO, 9 (1913), pp. 141–236, here 199; cf. Hills, *The Epistle*, p. 40 (he provides no other variants, whereas he consulted 14 manuscripts belonging, according to him, to two families); Hills provides a long “additional note” (pp. 88–89) in order to demonstrate that “Passover” in Ethiopic has here the same meaning as “Unleavened (Bread)” in Coptic and Latin. I am not quite sure that he is right, but, anyway, this is not vital for our analysis of SA.

45 C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung. Ein katholisch-apostolisches Sendschreiben des 2. Jahrhunderts. Nach einem koptischen Papyrus des Institut de la Mission archéologique française au Caire unter Mitarbeit von Herrn P. Lacau hrsgeb., übersetzt und untersucht nebst drei Exkursen*, (Texte und Untersuchungen, 43), Leipzig, 1919, S. 6*.

46 Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu*, S. 22.

the tradition that goes back, through the *Merkabah* mysticism, to the *therapeutae* described by Philo.⁴⁷

The topics of *Ma'aseh Merkabah* (מעשה מרכבה "Work of the Chariot") with its commemoration of the revelation of Ezekiel is liturgically related to the feast of Pentecost. The Christian Pentecost as it is described in the book of Acts is shaped with the same mystical tradition, sharing motifs that "...underlie the stories of Johanan b. Zakkai and his disciples."⁴⁸ The first-century rabbi Johanan b. Zakkai appears as the main authority of the rabbinic *Merkabah* texts. I would like to add, in this perspective, that the Christian expectation of the Second Coming of the Messiah at Pentecost is a further elaboration on the human-like figure from the *merkabah* vision of Ezekiel (Ez 1:26).⁴⁹

Here I can only notice *en passant* that the parallels between the mystical traditions related to Jesus and those related to R. Johanan b. Zakkai are still not fully explored. As an illustration of this fact I could mention that the famous scene of R. Johanan b. Zakkai teaching on the *Ma'aseh Merkabah* (*bHagigah* 14b) takes place when the rabbi "sat upon a stone beneath an olive tree." The symbolism of the olive (olive tree) is shared by this scene with the Olivet discourse pronounced on the "mountain of olive trees."

The study of Scriptures as a "reparation" is applied in the *Zohar* to the bridal jewellery of the people of Israel as the bride of God ("As Rabbi Shimon used to say to his friends who gathered at his house on that night, Let us repair [לתקן] the bridal jewellery so she can be appear tomorrow with her jewellery which has been repaired as is proper, with the Almighty"⁵⁰). This imagery, however, evokes the finding of the "book of the Law of the Lord" during the repair of the "house of Lord" (temple) (2 Kgs 22:8; 2 Chr 34:14); the workmen were in "the house" (*sc.*, the house of Lord) with the purpose "to repair and amend the house" (לְבַדֵּק וּלְתַקֵּן הַבַּיִת) (2 Chr 34:10; cf. 2 Kgs 22:6: "to amend the house" (לְתַקֵּן אֶת-הַבַּיִת) or, more exactly, "to repair the breaches of the house" (לְתַקֵּן בְּדֵק הַבַּיִת) (2 Kgs 22:5). These "breaches of the house" provide a hint for further interpretation of the gospel example with the thief who "breaks into the house."

47 Cf. Y. Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, New York, 1993, pp. 78–82.

48 D.J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot. Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (TSAJ, 16), Tübingen, 1988, pp. 16–18, esp. 17.

49 Cf. more on the Lukan angelomorphic but divine Jesus in C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke–Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (WUNT, 11.94), Tübingen, 1997.

50 *Zohar, Vayikra*, Parashat Emor, f. 88a (Soncino tr.).

At least, Josephine Massyngberd Ford was a scholar who has already evoked the tradition of the Pentecostal studying of the Torah in connexion to SA.⁵¹ This Jewish tradition was cited by Ford from a source of an unknown date but much earlier than the *Zohar*, the Midrash on the Song of Songs (*Midrash Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*).⁵² The midrash continuously elaborates on Exodus motives related to the Covenant as the bridal union between God and Israel.⁵³ At one place, the Midrash allows to perceive why the motives of bridal jewellery and of repair of a house became united.

In Song 4:8, God calls his bride Israel: “Come with Me from Lebanon, My bride, with Me from Lebanon.” The Midrash on this place (§ 1) says: “We have learnt elsewhere: ‘A virgin is allowed twelve months from the time of bridegroom claims her to prepare herself for the wedding.’ I [*sc.*, God], however, did not do so, but while you were still busy with mortar and bricks I hastened to redeem you (ואני לא עשיתי כן, אלא עד שאתם עוסקין בטיט ולבנים קפצתי וגאלתי) (אתכם)” (Soncino tr. with minor changes).⁵⁴ As Ford pointed out, such an interpretation became possible because of a wordplay “Lebanon” / *lebenim*

51 Although with a different part of it, that of the Ten Virgins parable: J. Massyngberd Ford, “The Parable of the Foolish Scholars (Matt. xxv 1–13),” *NT*, 9 (1967), pp. 107–123; cf. criticisms of her position summarised in, e. g., D.A. Carson, *Matthew*, in: *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (*Matthew, Mark, Luke*), ed. F.E. Gaebelin, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, pp. 1–599, here 512.

52 The midrash itself normally refers to authorities of the Amoraim rabbis (3rd–4th cent.), but its own date as a running commentary is defined by a modern scholar only as following: “All we know is that a major Rabbinic commentary on the Song of Songs was somehow created in late antiquity, and somehow successfully passed on to the Middle Ages” (P.R. Junkermann, *The Relationship between Targum of Song of Songs and Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs*, PhD Thesis, Univ. of Manchester, 2010, p. 110).

53 Massyngberd Ford, “The Parable,” 109; including, among others, some explicit indications that the night meant in the Song of Songs is that of the Pentecost. For instance, Song 5:3 (“I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on”) is explained, by R. Johannan in the name of Resh Lakish: “But why in fact is this said? Because sleep at Pentecost time is sweet and the night is short (לפי ששנית העצרת עריבה והיילה קצרה)” (Soncino tr.); the Hebrew text is quoted according to the synoptic edition by T. Kadari (*Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah: A Synoptic Edition*, 2014) within the on-line *Midrash Project* by the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem; <<http://www.schechter.ac.il/schechter/ShirHashirim/9.pdf>>. The meaning of the term עצרת (lit. “solemn assembly,” used in Mishnaic and Talmudic Hebrew for Passover and Tabernacles as well) is clear from the context (partially reviewed by Ford). On the tannaitic (1st–3rd cent.) tradition to understand the whole Song of Songs as referring to either Israel’s crossing of the Sea or the events at Sinai, demonstrated at first by Saul Lieberman in 1965, s. D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature), Bloomington – Indianapolis, 1990, esp. pp. 114, 155.

54 Kadari, *Midrash*, <<http://www.schechter.ac.il/schechter/ShirHashirim/8.pdf>>.

(“bricks”). These mortar and bricks are still referring to those of the Jews in Egypt (Ex 1:14), but these motives would have required some actualisation in the present-day activity of the Torah scholars. This situation provoked recollection of other mortar and bricks needed for repairing the house of Lord. This Midrash is interesting to us as an indirect but relatively early witness of the “repair” tradition.

The need of such repair of the house of the Lord was, of course, presupposed by the events of the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. The fall of Jerusalem took place at night and is described with the words “the city was broken up” (וַתִּבְרַקַּע הָעִיר) (Jer 52:7). The Greek rendering of this phrase is somewhat different with the gospel wording (καὶ διεκόπη ἡ πόλις LXX; cf. διορυχθῆναι [variant reading in Mt διορυγήναι] τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ Mt 24:43 = Lk 12:39), but both Greek verbs, διακόπτω and διορύσσω, have the same meaning of digging through and house breaking. Thus, the loss of the Law of the Lord and its finding back are mutually connected as “house breaking” and “repairing the breaches of the house”.

It would be reasonable to conclude that this understanding of the Pentecost study of Scriptures – already attested to among the *therapeutae* – has been understood as “repairing the breaches” already in the early Jewish mysticism, long before the *Zohar*. Historical books place the event of finding the book of the Law before the Passover (cf. 2 Kgs 23:21–23; 1 Chr 35:1), but the relevant data are contradictory: cf. dating to the “eighth/seventh” month (variant readings in 2 Kgs 22:3 LXX) but no date here in the Hebrew Bible.

In my opinion, we have to conclude that the owner of the house’s watching against the thief who could breaking through is another kind of the all-night vigil prescribed for the pentacontad festivals of the *therapeutae* as well as the Shavout feast according to the tradition of the *tiqqun leyl Shavu’ot* attested to (but not established!) in the *Zohar*. The gospels’ source for this material, SA would presuppose series of the pentacontad festivals similar to that of the *Temple Scroll* but hardly the full cycle of seven pentacontads per year as it seems to be implied in the liturgical calendar of the *therapeutae* and some other calendars.⁵⁵

Our conclusion about the meaning of Pentecost, in SA, as the day of Messiah’s arrival will be corroborated with the example of the fig tree (s. below, section 8).

55 Cf. Lourié, “A 364-Day Calendar Encapsulated ...”

7 The Midpentecost and/or Second Passover: Noah

Going backward, we have now arrived to the beginning of our series of parables and examples – to Noah (Mt) or Noah and Lot (Lk). The calendrical sources that I know do not contain anything relating to Lot, but do contain a lot about Noah. It was Jan van Goudoever who was the first to observe that the date of the beginning of the flood, 17.II (in *Jubilees* and MT), is probably related to the commemoration of the Midpentecost according to the 364-day calendar where the date of Pentecost was 15.III.⁵⁶ The four elaborated flood chronologies we know contain the following dates of the flood⁵⁷ (s. Table 4; the *Book of Jubilees* contains three different dates related to the end of the flood):

TABLE 4

	MT/SamPent	LXX	4Q252	Jubilees
Beginning	17.II	27.II	17.II	17.II
End	27.II	27.II	17.II	17.II; 27.II; 1.III

Van Goudoever's supposition is supported by the data of a Second Temple Jewish calendar preserved as the basis of the Ethiopian system of the Easter computus.⁵⁸

The exact date of the Midpentecost in the calendars where Pentecost falls on 15.III (*Jubilees*, *Temple Scroll*, etc.) is 14.II. This is also the date of the "second" (postponed) Passover (Num 9:6–13) which, in some post-Exilic tradition, overshadowed the first Passover in Nisan. Indeed, the celebration of Passover after the Exile according to 2 Chr 30:15 took place for the first time on 14.II instead of 14.I. In several post-Exilic traditions the principal Passover feast on 14 Nisan "turned into mourning" (Amos 8:10) of Jerusalem and the Temple, and so was no longer a feast at all (3 *Baruch*, 4 *Baruch*). But the feasts of the second month became, in several traditions, the starting points of the serial revelations. Thus,

56 J. van Goudoever, *Fêtes et calendriers bibliques*, 3me éd. revue et augmentée, tr. de l'anglais par M.-L. Kerremans (Théologie historique, 7), Paris, 1967, pp. 193–194.

57 I owe the relevant data to H. Jakobus, "Flood Calendars and Birds of the Ark in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q252 and 4Q254a), Septuagint, and Ancient Near East Texts," in: *Opening Heaven's Floodgates. The Genesis Flood Narrative, its Context, and Reception*, ed. J.M. Silverman (Biblical Intersections, 12), Piscataway, NJ, 2013, pp. 85–112. SamPent = Samaritan Pentateuch.

58 B. Lourié, Computus, in: *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, ed. vol. 1, S. Uhlig, Wiesbaden, 2003, pp. 784–787.

in 2 (*Syriac*) *Baruch*, the whole series of visions and other divine manifestations begin at 14.II, the day of the postponed Passover.⁵⁹ The liturgical scheme of the Revelation of John is very similar to that of 2 *Baruch* and goes back, most probably, to the same calendrical frame.⁶⁰

Some date of the Midpentecost (not necessarily but probably 14.II, that of the "second Passover") is to be restored behind the mention of Noah and the flood in SA.

8 The Passage from the Non-Calendrical to the Calendrical Narrative

The apparently non-calendrical narrative (Mt 24:1–35 and parallels) is considered by the scholars as a part of the same SA, but this is not to say that it is necessarily a part of the same Jewish source that is paraphrased in the following verses. Apparently, it presents an alternative description of the same events, using the language of signs instead the language of parables. It is possible – but not necessary – that the Jewish *Vorlage* of SA would have had a non-calendrical narrative part (as, e. g., the *Apocalypse of Abraham*).

The problems of this non-calendrical narrative are beyond the scope of the present paper, because our method of liturgical reconstruction is inapplicable there. Only the passage between the two different narratives is of interest here (Mt 24:32–35; Mk 13:28–32; Lk 21:29–33). This passage contains a verse with the calendrical meaning (Mt 24:32; Mk 13:28; Lk 21:30): "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer (ἔρος) is near" (Mt 24:32; the parallel places and the variant readings do not affect our analysis).

The literal meaning of this verse is that in the time of appearance of leaves and budding, that is, in the spring, you know that the summer is near. In the context, this sentence defines the time of the Second Coming as summer. This is in the complete agreement with our conclusion that our text appoints this event at Pentecost (that is, somewhere in the beginning of the summer) but certainly not at Passover.

59 Cf. B. Lourié, "The Calendar Implied in 2 *Baruch* and 4 *Ezra*: Two Modifications of the One Scheme," in: *Interpreting 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. International Studies*, ed. G. Boccaccini, J.M. Zurawski (Library of Second Temple Studies, 87), London etc., 2014, pp. 124–137.

60 Lourié, "The Calendar Implied in 2 *Baruch*."

9 Conclusion

The calendrical material of SA is a core of a Second Temple Jewish apocalypse, which is relatively good preserved in Matthew and could be repaired further with recourse to other sources. The liturgical calendar implied in this apocalypse is especially close to those of *2 Baruch* and *3 Baruch*. See Table 5 for its outline.⁶¹

TABLE 5

Synoptic Apocalypse	Liturgical meaning
[Example of the fig tree]	[Explicitly: summer. Implicitly: Pentecost]
Noah and Lot	Midpentecost (probably with the “Second Passover” on 14.11)
Owner of the House and Thief	Pentecost
Good and Wicked Slaves	New Wine
Ten Virgins	New Oil
Talents	1–10 Tishri (Lk) or 3–10 Tishri (Mt)
Judgment: Sheep and Goats	Day of Atonement

61 I am very grateful to Boris Veytsman for his continuous help.