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### Abram's Prayer

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*Published in:*  
 Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees

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*Document Version*  
 Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
 2009

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
 Ruiten, J. V. (2009). Abram's Prayer: The Coherence of the Pericopes in Jubilees 12. In Boccaccini/Gabriele, & Ibba/Giovanni (Eds.), *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (pp. 211-228). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

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# Abram's Prayer: The Coherence of the Pericopes in Jubilees 12:16-27

*Jacques van Ruiten*

In this contribution I will concentrate on the prayer of Abram and the surrounding events in the book of Jubilees (12:16-27).<sup>1</sup> To be able to address the question of coherence and tradition of this passage, I will first distinguish the smaller pericopes from each other within this passage on the basis of their use of words and theme. I will then try to show how they are inter-related. Finally, I will look into the way Jub 12:16-27 is embedded in the book and try to identify the traditions within this passage.

## 1. The Pericopes in Jubilees 12:16-27

The events that take place around Abram's prayer (12:16-27) can be divided into four pericopes: (a) Abram observes the stars (vv. 16-18); (b) Abram's prayer (19-22a); (c) God's answer (22b-24); and (d) Abram learns Hebrew (25-27). With the exception of the third pericope, which is a rewriting of Gen 12:1-3, these pericopes can be considered additions to the biblical text of Genesis. They are distinguished from each other by subject and the repetition of words. Because of the length of the passages as a whole, I will present first the text of the smaller pericopes, followed by a short description of the literary unity of each pericope with regard to subject and use of words. For

1. I will speak consistently about Abram, since his name is changed to Abraham only in Gen 17:5 (Jub 15:7).

12:22-24 I will also go into the rewriting of the biblical text. After this, I will deal with the coherence of the four pericopes as a whole.

**Jubilees 12:16-18 (Abram observes the stars)<sup>2</sup>**

- 16a In the sixth week, during its fifth year, Abram sat at night — at the beginning of the seventh month — to observe the stars from evening until morning in order to see what would be the character of the year with respect to the rains.
- b He was sitting
- c and he was observing.
- 17a A voice came in his heart
- b and he said:
- c “All the signs of the stars and signs of the moon and the sun — all are in the hand of the Lord.
- d Why am I seeking?
- 18a If he wishes
- b he will make it rain in the morning and evening;
- c and if he wishes,
- d he will not make it fall.
- e Everything is in his hand.”

This first small passage shows the following repetition of words and phrases: “stars” (12:16a, 17c); “to observe” (12:16a, 16c); “signs” (12:17c); “evening” and “morning” (12:16a, 18b); “rain” (12:16a, 18b); “to sit” (12:16a, 16b); “all / everything is in his hand” (12:17c, 18e); and “if he wishes” (12:18a, 18c). The direct speech (12:17c-18) can be characterized as a monologue (12:17a: “A voice came in his heart”). Unlike the narrative context, the direct speech shows a poetical structure in that there is balance between the lines. Within this structure 12:17c (“all are in the hand of the Lord”) balances with 12:18e (“Everything is in his hand”). In between these lines, there are two sentences with an identical beginning (12:18a, c: “if he wishes”) followed by an anti-thenetical effect (12:18b, d). It is striking that 12:17d (“Why am I seeking?”) is not balanced by another line. In this way it acquires a certain emphasis.

2. The translation is based on J. C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees, II*, CSCO 511, *Scriptores Aethiopic*, 88 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989). However, I feel free to deviate from this translation to do justice to the repetition of words.

Jubilees 12:19-22a (Abram's prayer)

- 19a That night he prayed  
 b and he said:  
 c "My God, my God, God most High,  
 d You alone are my God.  
 e You have created everything;  
 f Everything that was and has been is the work of your hands.  
 g You and your kingdom I have chosen.  
 20a Save me from the hand of the evil spirits who rule the thoughts  
 of the people's heart.  
 b May they not lead me astray from following you, my God.  
 c Do establish me and my seed until eternity.  
 d May we not go astray from now until eternity."  
 21a And he said:  
 b "Shall I return to Ur of the Chaldeans who are seeking me to  
 return to them?  
 c Or am I to sit here in this place?  
 d Make the path that is straight before you prosper through the  
 hand of your servant so that he may do (it).  
 e May I not proceed in the going astray of my heart, my God."  
 22a He finished his speaking and his praying.

This second passage is introduced with a form of "to pray" (12:19a). It also ends with a form of "to pray" (12:22a). Abram's prayer can be subdivided into two units: 12:19-20 and 12:21, with both units introduced by "and he said" (12:19b, 21a). The prayer consists of a combination of a hymn (12:19c-f) and a supplication (12:20a-d, 21d-e). The prayer also includes a question that cannot be characterized as a supplication (12:21bc). This passage shows the following repetition of words: "to pray" (12:19a, 22a); "hand" (12:19f, 20a, 21d); "to go astray" (12:20b, 20d, 21e); "until eternity" (12:20c, 20d); "return" (12:21b [2x]); "my God" (12:19c [2x], 19d, 20b, 21e); and "heart" (12:20a, 21e). The prayer has a poetical structure in that two subsequent lines are balanced by each other with regard to the use of words and contents (12:19c and 12:19d; 12:19e and 12:19f; 12:20a and 12:20b; 12:20c and 12:20d; 12:21b and 12:21c; 12:21d and 12:21e).<sup>3</sup> Also in this passage is one unbalanced line (19g: "You and your kingdom I have chosen").

3. The passage shows *parallelismus membrorum*, which is characteristic of the prosodic structure of poetry in the Hebrew Bible.

The third pericope, in which God answers Abram's prayer, can be considered a rewriting of Gen 12:1-3, the call to go to Canaan. Therefore, I will now put both texts side by side.<sup>4</sup>

Genesis 12:1-3

- 1a *And the Lord said to Abram:*
- 1b “Go from your land and your family and your father's house to the land that I will show you.
- 2a I will *make* of you a great [ ] people.
- 2b I will bless you,
- 2c and make your name great.
- 2d You will become a blessing [ ].
- 3a I will bless those who bless you,
- 3b and *him* who curses you I will curse;
- 3c and all the families of the land will be blessed in you.”

Jubilees 12:22b-24 (God's answer)

- 22b *And behold, the word of the Lord was sent to him through my hand, saying:*
- c “Now you, come from your land, from your family, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.
- d I will *establish* you into a large AND POPULOUS people.
- 23a I will bless you,
- b and make your name great.
- c You will become blessed IN THE LAND.
- d All the peoples of the land will be blessed in you.
- e Those who bless you I will bless,
- f and *those* who curse you I will curse.
- 24a I WILL BECOME GOD FOR YOU, YOUR SON, YOUR GRANDSON, AND ALL YOUR SEED.
- b DO NOT BE AFRAID.
- c FROM NOW UNTIL ALL THE FAMILIES GENERATIONS OF THE LAND I AM YOUR GOD.”

4. In the following synoptic overview, I have tried to present a classification of the similarities and dissimilarities between Genesis and Jubilees. I have used small caps to highlight those elements of Genesis that do not occur in Jubilees, and vice versa, i.e., the omissions and additions. I have used “normal script” for the corresponding elements between both texts, i.e., the verbatim quotations of one or more words from the source text in Jubilees, besides additions or omissions. Sometimes there is a rearrangement of words and sentences. I have underlined those elements.

The third pericope, in which God answers Abram's prayer, can be considered a rewriting of Gen 12:1-3, the call to go to Canaan. This passage shows the following repetition of words: "to bless" (12:23a, 23c, 23d, 23e [2x]); "to curse" (12:23f); "land" (12:22c [2x], 23c, 23d, 24c); "I will become God for you" (12:24a; cf. 12:24c); and "family" (12:22c, 24c ["generations"]). The poetical structure of the passage is reflected in the balance between the two subsequent lines (12:22c and 12:22d; 12:23a and 12:23b; 12:23c and 12:23d; 12:23e and 12:23f; 12:24a and 12:24c). One line is not balanced, namely, 12:24b ("do not be afraid").

With regard to the text of Gen 12:1-3, Jub 12:22b-24 shows additions (12:22d; 12:23c; 12:24), variations (12:22b, 22d), and rearrangement (12:23d). Jub 12:22b can be considered a variation of Gen 12:1a. In fact, it also has some additions: "and behold"; "the word of"; and "saying," in addition to the variation "was sent through my hand" instead of "said," and "to him" instead of "to Abram." This rewriting results in an avoidance of a direct contact between God and Abram. It is the angel who mediates between them. This mediation occurs also in the addition 12:25-26. In Jub 13:3 (cf. Gen 12:7), just after Abram entered the land of Canaan, the Lord here speaks directly to Abram without the intermediary of an angel. From then onward God addresses himself directly to Abra(ha)m.

Jub 12:22d uses the word "to put; to establish" (*rassaya*), where Gen 12:2a has "to make" (עשה; LXX: ποιέω). The same word is used in Abram's prayer (12:20c). Possibly the use of *rassaya* has been influenced by the blessing in Gen 13:16 ("I will establish [שום] your descendants like the dust of the earth") for which Jub 13:20b reads: "I will establish [*rassaya*] your descendants like the sands of the sea."<sup>5</sup> Also, the addition "and populous" in Jub 12:22d is possibly influenced by a parallel passage. I refer to Gen 18:18 (לגוי גדול ועצום): "a great and populous people"). Also, one textual witness of the Septuagint Gen 12:2a (d 458) adds "and populous" (καὶ πολύ).<sup>6</sup>

Jub 12:23c shows a combination of variation ("blessed" instead of "a blessing") and addition ("in the land"). This transformation stresses the fact that Abram is the one who is blessed. It does not focus on his role as being a

5. See also Gen 21:18 ("I will make him [אשימנו] a great nation," where Jub 17:7 reads: "I will make him [*rassaya*] into a great nation"). Compare Gen 46:3 ("for I will there make of you [אשימך] a great nation," where Jub 44:5 reads: "I will make [*sar'a*] you into a great nation there"), but the difference between the Ethiopic verbs *rassaya* and *sar'a* seems to be very small. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, II, 289.

6. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, II, 73.



blessing *for others*, as can be argued from Gen 12:2d.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Jubilees adds that Abram is blessed *wəsta mədr*, which I have translated here (and in 12:23d) as “in the land.”<sup>8</sup> This is in conformity with the translation of *mədr* in 12:22c. Moreover, both in Genesis and in Jubilees the blessing of Abram is related to his entrance into the land. Both in Genesis and Jubilees the promise of an abundance of offspring is combined with the promise of the land.<sup>9</sup>

The rearrangement of Gen 12:3c in Jub 12:23d is possibly due to a specific view of the poetic structure of the passage. In Gen 12:1-3 one can point to a balance between 12:1b and 12:2a; 12:2b and 12:2c; 12:3a and 12:3c. In this structure both Gen 12:2d and 12:3c are not balanced by any adjacent line. By putting Gen 12:3c after Gen 12:2d (in Jub 12:23cd) and, moreover, by adding the words “in the land” to Gen 12:2d, Jubilees strengthens the balance between these lines (Gen 12:2d, 3c). The use of “peoples” (*ʿaḥzab*) instead of “families” (*משפחה*; Eth. *ʿazmād*) is possibly influenced by the use of “peoples” in comparable contexts: Gen 18:18 (“and all the *peoples* of the land will be blessed in him”) and Gen 22:18 (cf. Gen 26:4) (“and in your seed will all the *peoples* of the land bless themselves”). Note, however, that Gen 28:14 uses the word “families” (“and in you and your seed will all the *families* of the land be blessed”).

The reading in Jub 12:23f (“*those* who curse you”; plural) instead of the

7. R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 124, and Keith N. Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context*, BZAW 332 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), have argued that Gen 12:2d does not make Abram a source of blessing to others, but rather promises that he will be signally blessed in such a way that others will notice.

8. So also O. S. Wintermute, “*Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction*,” in *OTP*, 2:81. However, in Jub 12:23d he translates this by “of the earth.” R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis: Translated from the Editor’s Ethiopic Text* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1902), 95, and VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees, II*, 73, translate *mədr* in both cases by “the earth.” K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen, JSHRZ*, V.3 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1981), 395, reads “auf der Erde.”

9. Israel has the status of God’s people from the creation onward. Israel is separated from the other peoples and lives in a sacred space. For the centrality of the land in the book of Jubilees, see J. M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees*, JSJSup 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 161-209. Scott stresses that the holy land of Israel with its central sanctuary is the focal point of the concept that the goal of history is the realignment of sacred space with sacred time so that everything will become “on earth as in heaven.” The universalistic strains in the book are subordinated to its particularistic emphasis on Israel and the temple in the land. The exact boundaries of the land are precisely defined.

Masoretic text of Gen 12:3b (“*him* who curses you”; singular) reflects the plural reading that is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and the Peshitta. It is not necessary, therefore, to consider this a variation.

Finally, the most striking element in the rewriting is the addition of Jub 12:24. In Gen 12:1-3 there are no clues that could explain this addition. One could, of course, think of a possible influence from comparable passages, especially from the introduction to the concluding of the covenant in Gen 17 (Gen 17:1-8). Apart from the promise of the land and of numerous offspring, the conclusion of the covenant includes a promise that God makes to Abram and his descendants (Gen 17:7-8: “And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, *to be God to you and to your seed after you*. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, *and I will be their God*”).<sup>10</sup> Although I would not exclude the possibility that 12:24 alludes to the covenant of Gen 17, God’s answer in 12:24 is a confirmation of Abram’s supplication in the first place and reflects the multiple invocation of “My God, my God, God most high. You alone are my God” (12:19cd).

In the last pericope of this passage Abram learns Hebrew:

**Jubilees 12:25-27 (Abram learns Hebrew)**

- 25a Then the Lord God said to me:
- b “Open his mouth and his ears to hear
- c and speak with his tongue in the revealed language.”
- d For from the day of the collapse it had disappeared from the mouth(s) of all mankind.
- 26a I opened his mouth, ears, and lips
- b and began to speak Hebrew with him — in the language of the creation.
- 27a He took his fathers’ books
- b (they were written in Hebrew)
- c and copied them.
- d From that time he began to study them,
- e while I was telling him everything that he was unable (to understand).
- f He studied them throughout the six rainy months.

10. The rewriting of Gen 17:7-8 in Jub 15:9-10 is very literal.



In this pericope the narrative in which the actions of Abram play a part is dominant. This was also true in the first passage (12:16-18). As far as the subject is concerned (the learning of Hebrew and the studying of the books of his father), this pericope is somewhat loosely connected with the other pericopes. Within the pericope the following repetition of words and phrases occurs: “to speak in the language” (12:25c, 26b); “to open mouth and ears” (12:25b, 26a); and “Hebrew” (12:26b, 27b).

## **2. The Coherence of Jubilees 12:16-27**

The four pericopes are distinguished from each other by subject and the use of words. However, there is coherence in the four passages as a whole. In the first place, all the pericopes are located in Haran. In the second place, one can point to a unity of time to a great extent. The events take place when Abram was seventy-five years of age (cf. 12:16: “In the sixth week, during its fifth year,” which is 1951 A.M.). The destruction of the house of idols in the preceding passage took place in the sixtieth year of Abram’s life (12:12), after which it is mentioned that they stayed for fourteen years in Haran (12:15). In the following passage his departure is dated two years after the prayer (cf. 12:28: “In the seventh year of the sixth week”). The aspect of time is specified in that the observation of the stars and the prayer took place during the night (cf. 12:16a, 19a) and the studying of the books during a period of six months (cf. 12:27f). Moreover, both in the beginning and at the end the text climatological circumstances are referred to, namely, the rain (cf. 12:16a, 18, 27). In the third place, one can point to the use of persons. Both in the preceding (12:12-15) and in the following passage (12:28–13:6) several members of Abram’s family are mentioned,<sup>11</sup> whereas in 12:16-27 it is mainly Abram who is the person acting. One sees him watching the stars all alone (12:16-18), after which he addresses God in prayer (12:19-22a). God answers Abram’s prayer through an angel (12:22-24, 25-26). Finally, it is Abram who copies and studies the Hebrew books (12:27).

Moreover, one can point to the repetitions of some words that occur in more than one passage: “night” (12:16a, 19a), “to sit” (12:16a, 16b, 21c), “(all /

11. In 12:12-15: “Haran” (14a), “his father Terah” (14d), “Terah” (15a), “he and his sons” (15a), and “his father” (15d). In 12:28–13:7: “his father” (12:28a), “his father Terah” (12:29a), “Lot the son of your brother Haran” (12:30d; 13:1b), “your brother Nahor” (12:31a), and “his wife Sarai” (13:1b).

everything in his) hand” (12:17c, 18e, 19f; cf. 12:20a, 21d, 22b), “to seek” (12:17d, 21b), “seed” (12:20c, 24a), “to establish” (12:20c, 22d), and “heart” (12:17a, 20a, 21e).

The second (Abram's prayer) and the third pericope (God's answer) are especially interrelated. Abram's questioning of whether he has to return to Ur of the Chaldeans (12:21bc) not only refers back to the burning down of the house of idols (12:12-14), but also prepares God's call to leave his land and his father's house in order to go to the land that he will show him (12:22c). The supplication in 12:20c (“Do establish me and my seed until eternity”) is reflected in the promise that God will bless Abram in this land and establish him as progenitor of a large and populous people (12:22d-23). The multiple invocation of “My God, my God, God most high. You alone are my God” (12:19cd) is reflected in God's answer of “I will become God for you” (12:24a). The supplication to save him from the hand of the evil spirits (12:20ab) is not answered explicitly. However, the call to leave his father's house to go to the land that God will show him (12:22c) can be understood as a liberation from the power of the evil spirits. In the new land Abram will prosper and be blessed. He need not be afraid. Several elements in the prayer and its answer are put chiastically in the text, as is shown in the following table:

- A You alone are my God (19d)
- B Establish me and my seed (20c)
- C Shall I return to Ur of the Chaldeans or sit in this place (21bc)?
  
- C' Come from your country (22c)
- B' I will establish you into a large and populous people (22d-23)
- A' I will become God for you (24a, c)

### **3. Abram's Prayer in Relation to Other Prayers in Jubilees**

The strong similarity in form and content with other prayers in the book of Jubilees confirms the unity of the passage as a whole (12:16-27). One can point specifically to Noah's prayer (10:1-14), but Moses' prayer (1:19-21) is also relevant in this respect. As far as the content is concerned, one can refer also to Abram's blessing of Jacob (19:26-29). These texts show an affinity to each other not only because the one who prays begs for God's help to hold back the influence of the evil spirits, but also because the cause for the prayer, its form, and God's reaction show similarities.

### 3.1. Abram's Prayer and Noah's Prayer

The following scheme shows the similar structure of Abram's prayer and that of Noah, together with the cause for the prayer and God's reaction:

#### Noah's prayer (Jub 10:1-14)

1. *Cause for the prayer*: dominion of the evil spirits (10:1-2)
2. *Form of the prayer*
  - a. praise (10:3c-h)
  - b. supplication (10:3hi, 4, 5b-6)
3. *Actions after the prayer*
  - a. At God's request the angels bind 90 percent of the evil spirits after intercession by Mastema (10:7-9, 11)
  - b. God orders the angels to teach Noah about the medicines (10:10, 12-13)
  - c. Noah writes in a book and gives it to his eldest son (10:13, 14)

#### Abram's prayer (Jub 12:16-27)

1. *Cause for the prayer*: rejection of astrology through the recognition of God's power (12:16-18); dominion of the evil spirits (12:20ab)
2. *Form of the prayer*
  - a. praise (12:19c-f; cf. 12:4)
  - b. supplication (12:20, 21d-e; cf. 11:17bc).
3. *Actions after the prayer*
  - a. God answers Abram through an angel, and calls him to the land (12:22b-24)
  - b. God orders the angels to teach Abram the Hebrew language (12:25-26)
  - c. Abram takes the books of his father and copies them (12:27)

The cause that brought about the prayer is formulated in different ways. Whereas the dominion of the evil spirits and their threatening of Noah's grandchildren (10:1-2) form the direct cause for Noah's prayer, Abram's prayer is caused by the recognition of the omnipotence of God when he practices astrology (12:16-18). However, Abram does pray to save himself "from the hand of the evil spirits who rule the thoughts of the people's heart" (12:20ab). He continues, praying that they may not lead him astray from following God. It is possible that the practice of astrology should be understood as a manifestation of the misleading of the evil spirits. Other passages in Jubilees show a clear connection between the demons and astrology. In 8:1-4 astrology is identified with the illegal teaching of the watchers. After Kainan was instructed in the art of writing (8:2b), he found an inscription on a rock that described the astrological teachings of the watchers "by

which they used to observe the omens of the sun, moon, and stars, and every heavenly sign" (8:3). These signs were probably used to predict the future.<sup>12</sup> Kainan copied these instructions from the stone "and sinned on the basis of what was in it." The teachings of the watchers contrast with the teachings of the patriarchs, which were received from the angels.<sup>13</sup> As far as the astrological teachings of the watchers are concerned, the author is probably referring to an Enochic tradition. In 1 En 6–11 the watchers are not only involved in illicit sexual practices and violence, but they are also involved in astrological teachings. 1 En 8:3 says that "Barakiel taught astrologers, and Kokabel portents, and Tamiel taught astrology and Asradel taught the path of the moon."<sup>14</sup> It is remarkable that of all the illicit angelic instructions of the watchers mentioned in the Book of the Watchers (metalworking, cosmetics, sorcery, pharmacology, spellbinding, and celestial divination), Jubilees includes only one.<sup>15</sup>

In 11:8 one can read that Abram's grandfather Nahor learned from his father Serug "the studies of the Chaldeans: to practice divination and to augur by the signs of the sky." This forms the direct background for Abram's predictions of the weather for the coming year in 12:16–18.<sup>16</sup> Although 11:8 does not show an explicit disapproval of "the studies of the Chaldeans," it is striking that in the context of Serug's birth the threats of the evil spirits and their leader Mastema are mentioned (11:4–5). This means that the studies of the Chaldeans on the practice of divination are closely related to the influ-

12. M. Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology, and Theology*, JSJSup 117 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 260 n. 8.

13. Although this is the first time in Jubilees that the watchers are connected with astrological teachings, it should be remembered that Enoch was born immediately after the watchers came down on earth (4:15–16). The first thing he wrote down was concerned with calendrical and astronomical affairs: "the signs of the sky in accord with the fixed pattern of their months, so that mankind would know the seasons of the years according to the fixed patterns of each of their months" (4:17). The angels showed him the dominion of the sun (4:21), after which the text continues with mention of the watchers and their illicit intercourse.

14. A. Lange points to the heavy emphasis on the rejection of astrology in 1 En 8:3, which is developed further in Jub 8:3. Cf. A. Lange, "The Essene Position on Magic and Divination," in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies; Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten*, ed. M. Bernstein, F. García Martínez, and J. Kampen, STDJ 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 377–435 (here 400–402).

15. A. Y. Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 92–93. Cf. Lange, "The Essene Position," 400.

16. Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 260.

ence of the evil spirits. In 10:5, the only place in Jubilees that explicitly refers to a connection between the evil spirits and the watchers (the watchers are “fathers of these spirits”), the relationship between astrology and evil spirits is strengthened.<sup>17</sup> One can conclude that in both cases the reason that brought forth the prayer is more or less the same.

As far as the form of the prayer proper is concerned, it consists of a combination of praise and supplication. In the praise, Noah (10:3) puts emphasis on God’s grace (“You have shown kindness to me, saved me and my sons from the flood waters, and did not make me perish as you did to the people meant for destruction, because your mercy for me has been large, and your kindness to me has been great”), whereas Abram (12:19c-f; 12:4) puts an emphasis on God’s omnipotence (“My God, my God, God most High, you alone are my God. You have created everything; everything that was and has been is the work of your hands”).<sup>18</sup>

In Noah’s prayer the supplication contains two elements. On the one hand, Noah prays that the evil spirits may not rule over Noah’s children (10:3i: “And may the evil spirits not rule them in order to destroy them from the earth”; cf. 10:5-6). On the other hand, he prays for a blessing upon him and his children (10:4: “Now you bless me and my children so that we may increase, become numerous, and fill the earth”). Both elements occur also in the supplication in Abram’s prayer. The request to save him from the evil spirits plays an important part (12:20ab: “Save me from the hand of the evil spirits who rule the thoughts of the people’s heart. May they not lead me astray from following you, my God”). The element of blessing has its parallel in that Abram asks to establish him and his seed for eternity (12:20c) and that he as God’s servant may work on the right path (12:21d).

With regard to the actions that take place immediately after the prayer, in both cases there is a twofold action of God, followed by an action of the supplicant. In both cases God addresses himself not to the supplicant but to an angel (10:7, 10-12; 12:22b, 25-26, 27e). God’s first reaction to Noah’s prayer is his commandment to bind *all* the demons. After Mastema, the leader of the spirits, protests and asks for some of them to be left before him so he can

17. According to Segal (*The Book of Jubilees*, 179-80), it is difficult to connect the story of the watchers (a onetime event in history) with a system that sets up the world order from creation onward with God and Israel on one side and Mastema, the evil spirits, and the other nations on the other (cf. Jub 2:19-21; 15:30-32). Segal considers the connection between these two viewpoints as a secondary development. It is the result of the wish to integrate the spirit traditions from 1 Enoch into a dualistic worldview.

18. Compare also 12:4 (“He created everything by his word”).



exercise his authority among mankind (10:8), God allows him a tenth of them, and gives orders to bind 90 percent of the evil spirits (10:9). God's first reaction to Abram's prayer is a direct address to Abram through an angel in which Abram is summoned to leave his land and his father's house, and to go to the land that God will show him (12:22-24). The establishment in the new land seems to have a comparable function as the binding of the evil spirits. In the land where Abram and his descendants are to be blessed abundantly, the demons will have no influence.<sup>19</sup>

In the case of both Noah and Abram, God's initial reaction seems not to be sufficient to save their descendants from the influence of the evil spirits. In the subsequent second action, God instructs the angels. They should teach Noah all the medicines, which could protect him and his sons against attacks from the evil spirits (10:10, 12), and teach Abram the Hebrew language (12:25-26).

Finally, there is a reaction by the one who prays, which is comparable in both texts. Noah writes down in a book everything the angels have taught him. Thereafter, he gives all his books to his oldest son Shem (10:13-14).<sup>20</sup> Abram, who is from the line of Shem, learns Hebrew, takes his father's books, then copies and studies them (12:27). The mention of "his father's books" in 12:27 makes the connection with 10:13-14 explicit. Neither the binding of 90 percent of the demons nor his establishment in the land will give complete protection against the threat of the spirits. Books should also

19. Compare this with Noah's supplication in which the request that the evil spirits might not rule over Noah's children is put next to the request for a blessing upon his children (cf. 10:3i and 4a-d).

20. According to Segal (*The Book of Jubilees*, 171-73), the "book" (singular) in 10:13 cannot be identical with the "books" (plural) in 10:14. The reason to hand over the books to Shem ("because he loved him much more than all his sons") does not match up with the medicines, which were meant for *all* Noah's offspring. The transition from singular to plural even points to separate sources. The nature of the "books" (plural), which Noah handed over to his son Shem, should be understood in the light of the chain of tradition in which knowledge is handed over from generation to generation (7:38-39; 12:27; 21:10; 39:6; 45:16). In my opinion, one should not stress too much the transition from singular to plural. The fact that Noah writes a book with regard to medicines (10:13) does not exclude the fact that he has written other books. Enoch has written a book (4:17-19, 21-23), and in the end of his testament (7:38-39) Noah refers to that tradition. It is quite plausible that the new knowledge that Noah has received is going to belong to the chain of tradition. Moreover, it is really the offspring of Shem who have to be protected against the influence of the spirits. The spirits are permitted to have influence only over other peoples (15:31-32; cp. 10:8). Nevertheless, it is true that the plural in 10:14 shows that it is not just the knowledge with regard to medicines that is handed over.



be studied, books that contain, among other things, medicines against the attacks of evil spirits.

In conclusion, the comparison of Abram's prayer with that of Noah shows the similar structure of both texts. This confirms, moreover, the formal unity and the coherence in regard to the content of 12:16-27.

### 3.2. *Abram's Prayer and Moses' Prayer*

There is also a similarity between Abram's prayer with its preceding and following events and Moses' prayer (1:19-21) in the context of 1:5–2:1. The following scheme shows the structure of Moses' prayer, together with the cause for it, and God's reaction:

#### **Moses' prayer (Jub 1:5–2:1)**

1. *Cause for the prayer* (1:5-18)
2. *Form of the prayer* — supplication (1:19-21)
3. *Actions after the prayer*
  - a. God answers Moses with regard to his dealing with the people (1:22-24); Moses receives an order to write (1:25)
  - b. God orders the angel of the presence to dictate the story of history to Moses (1:27–2:1)

Despite a structure comparable to Abram's prayer, the cause for Moses' prayer seems to be somewhat different. Moses is reacting to a direct speech from God to him (1:5-18) in which the Deuteronomistic scheme of sin, punishment, repentance, and restoration can be found. Because of the direct interaction between God and Moses, God addresses Moses directly through the reactions to the prayer (1:22-25) and not through an angel, as was the case with Noah's and Abram's prayers. It is remarkable, however, that God also addresses Moses indirectly through an angel, since he orders the angels to dictate the story of Jubilees to Moses. Moses' prayer (1:19-21) mainly consists of supplication, although some elements of praise are integrated (20a: "your mercy"; 21a: "whom you have rescued from Egyptian control by your great power").

The structure of the supplication shows strong parallelism between the parts of the prayer:

- A O Lord my God, do not allow your people and your inheritance to go along in the strayings of their hearts (19d)

- B and do not deliver them into the hands of the nations, with the result that they rule over them (19ef),  
C lest they make them sin against you (19g).
- A' May your mercy, Lord, be raised over your people (20a).  
Create for them a just spirit (20b).  
B' May the spirit of Belial not rule over them (20c')  
D so as to bring charges against them before you (20c'')  
C' and to ensnare them away from every proper path (20d)  
so that they may be wiped away from your presence (20e).
- A'' They are your people and your inheritance whom you have rescued from Egyptian control (hands) by your great power (21a).  
Create for them a pure heart and a holy spirit (21b).  
C'' May they not be trapped in their sins from now to eternity (21c).

The prayer requests a just spirit from God for his people lest they follow the strayings of their heart (A). The parallelism between B and B' shows that the nations are put parallel with the "spirit of Belial." Both can rule over Israel. This means at the same time that both can cause Israel to sin against God (C). Whereas the nations cannot bring charges against Israel before God, the spirit of Belial is able to do so (D). Compare 1:19-21 in this respect with 15:30-33, in which God lets the spirits rule over the nations. God himself chooses Israel to be his people. Only God is Israel's ruler.

As far as the use of words and phrases is concerned, Moses' prayer has several similarities with Noah's and Abram's prayers. I refer to 1:19d ("the strayings of their hearts"; see 12:20ab, d, 21e; cf. 11:17); 1:20a ("May your mercy, Lord, be lifted over your people" (cf. 10:3h); 1:20c ("May the spirit of Belial not rule over them so as to bring charges against them before you"; see 12:20; 10:3i, 6a); 1:20d ("to ensnare them away from every proper path"; cf. 12:21d).

With regard to the actions that take place immediately after the prayer, there is a twofold action by God followed by an action not by the supplicant, but by the angel of the presence. God addresses himself directly to the supplicant (1:22-26) and not to an angel, as was the case after Noah's and Abram's prayers (10:7, 10-12; 12:22b, 25-26, 27e). God's first reaction is a speech to Moses in which he tells about the future repentance and restoration of the people. In this speech Moses is ordered to write down everything God makes known. In the subsequent, second speech, God instructs the angel of the presence to dictate the story to Moses (1:27-28). Finally, the angel

takes the tables of the division of the years and starts to dictate to Moses the content of history (1:29–2:1).

### 3.3. *Abram's Prayer and Abraham's Blessing for Jacob*

Finally, I would like to refer to Abraham's blessing for Jacob (19:26-29). There are several similarities with Abram's prayer. Abraham begs God to protect Jacob against the evil spirits (19:28a: "May the spirits of Mastema not rule over you and your descendants to remove you from following the Lord who is your God from now and forever"). The terminology that is used resembles that of Abram's prayer (12:20).<sup>21</sup> Immediately after this Abraham prays that God may be Jacob's father and Jacob his firstborn son (19:29: "May the Lord God become your father and you his first-born son and people for all time"). From the point of view of Jubilees, this means that God has chosen Jacob (Israel) from the beginning of time to be his unique people and his firstborn son (cf. 2:20). The consequence of this election is God's direct dominion over Israel. In contrast to this, spirits are appointed to control the other nations (cf. Deut 32:8-9; 4:19-20; Sir 17:17; Jub 15:30-32). The spirits mislead the nations on purpose and let them sin.<sup>22</sup> Although a father-son relationship between God and Israel is not at stake in Abram's prayer, one could say the confirmation of "I will become God for you, your son, your grandson, and all your seed" (12:24) implies that the spirits cannot take on that role. The spirits rule only over the other nations. The confirmation in 12:24 can therefore be taken as an answer to Abram's supplication to save him from the dominion of the evil spirits.

## 4. Enochic Traditions

Although the text of Jubilees is guided to a large extent by the biblical books of Genesis and Exodus as far as content and sequence are concerned, one should acknowledge that other sources and traditions are also incorporated into the book. The third pericope (Jub 12:22b-24) can be considered a re-writing of Gen 12:1-3. The other pericopes are additions with regard to the biblical text. Abram's prayer is closely connected with the other prayers in

21. Compare also 1:20; 10:8; 11:5.

22. Cf. Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 257-59.

the book. The prayers are caused by the threat of evil spirits. In the Bible there is no demonology. In Genesis one can read nothing about demons. Within Jubilees, however, demons occur in several places, especially in relation to the spread of mankind on the earth after the flood. They belong to the time of Noah and the early Abram, although they continue to operate in later times. Apart from the term “demon” (1:11c; 7:27; 10:1, 2; 22:17), “(evil) spirit” is also used (10:3, 5, 8, 11, 13; 11:4, 5; 12:20; 15:31, 32; 19:28). The demons are charged with causing bloodshed and with inciting people to kill each other. In this respect Jubilees seems to be influenced by other sources. The teaching about the demons seems to be part of the wider influence of material originating from the Enochic traditions.<sup>23</sup> One can point especially to the influence of 1 Enoch (Book of the Watchers). Jubilees shares the fundamental pattern of the Book of the Watchers in which the angels descended from heaven, married women, and sinned with them. Their children were the giants. In 1 En 15:8–16:1 it is described how the evil spirits came out of the carcasses of the giants and how they were threatening humanity: they do violence, make desolate, attack and wrestle and hurl upon the earth.<sup>24</sup> Jubilees seems not to be completely consistent here in that the demons are mentioned as the emanations from the angels themselves (10:5: “your watchers, the fathers of these spirits”), whereas it also understands the giants as the sons of the watchers (5:1, 6-10).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, it shows some deviations from

23. For the influence of Enochic traditions in the book of Jubilees, see especially J. C. VanderKam, “Enoch Traditions in Jubilees and Other Second-Century Sources,” in SBLSP 1 (1978), 229-51 (reprinted in VanderKam, *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*, JSJSup 62 [Leiden: Brill, 2000], 305-31). This work influenced his *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, CBQMS 16 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Bible Association of America, 1984), 179-88, and formed the basis of a chapter in *Enoch: A Man for All Generations*, Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 110-21. See also, some of his predecessors: R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis* (London, 1902), xlv, 36-39, 43-44; P. Grelot, “La légende d’Henoch dans les apocryphes et dans la Bible. Origine et signification,” *RSR* 46 (1958): 5-26, 181-210; J. T. Milik, *The Book of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). VanderKam is followed by, e.g., G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 71-76.

24. J. C. VanderKam, “The Demons in the Book of Jubilees,” in *Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of Their Environment*, ed. A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 339-64 (here 348-50); Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 267-75.

25. Jubilees possibly preserves several older traditions about the watchers. See Dimant, VanderKam, Segal.

its source text, e.g., the demons are put under the authority of Mastema (10:8; 11:5; 19:28; 49:2; cf. 11:11; 17:16; 18:9, 12; 48:2, 3-4, 9, 12-18). This leader of the demons is probably no demon himself, but a sort of evil angel. He is, however, not one of the watchers, because they are tied up in the depths of the earth until the great day of judgment (5:6-11). The demons do everything Mastema tells them, so that he is able to exercise the authority of his will among mankind to punish them for their evil (cf. 10:8).

## 5. Conclusion

In the prayer of Abram and the surrounding events (Jub 12:16-27), I identified four pericopes that are distinguished from each other by subject and the use of words. These pericopes are not disconnected, however. I pointed to the coherence of the four passages as a whole. There is unity of place (Haran), of time (the seventy-fifth year in Abram's life), and of persons (mainly Abram). A comparison of Abram's prayer with other prayers in the book of Jubilees (1:19-21; 10:1-14; 19:26-29) showed the strong connection between them in structure and content. The prayers are mostly included in the book of Jubilees as additions with regard to the biblical text of Genesis and Exodus. They are caused by the threat of evil spirits. In God's answer to the prayer's supplication, several means are put into action, such as dictating from the heavenly tablets, binding 90 percent of the evil spirits, teaching about medicines, copying and studying books, and making a promise to live in the land.

Abram's and Noah's prayers, the preceding events, and their acts of writing afterward can be seen as a sort of prefiguration of Moses' prayer and the dictating and copying of the book of Jubilees itself. In all these cases, there is a relationship between the teaching of the angels and the content of the book. The books contain the information necessary in the conflict with the evil spirits and are handed down from generation to generation. Through Jacob, information is handed over to Levi (Jub 45:16), Moses' great-grandfather.<sup>26</sup>

26. An important element in the rewriting of Genesis and Exodus in the book of Jubilees is the struggle against foreign influences, from evil spirits to other nations. The rewriting seems not to be a rewriting for no particular reason, but a means of using the biblical text in this struggle.

# ENOCH AND THE MOSAIC TORAH

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WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN / CAMBRIDGE, U.K.



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Published 2009 by  
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.  
2140 Oak Industrial Drive N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505 /  
P.O. Box 163, Cambridge CB3 9PU U.K.

Printed in the United States of America

14 13 12 11 10 09      7 6 5 4 3 2 1

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Enoch and the mosaic Torah: the evidence of Jubilees /  
edited by Gabriele Boccaccini & Giovanni Ibba;  
with the collaboration of Jason von Ehrenkrook,  
James Waddell, and Jason Zurawski.

p.      cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8028-6409-3 (pbk.: alk. paper)

1. Book of Jubilees — Criticism, interpretation, etc. — Congresses.
2. Enoch Seminar (2nd : 2003: Venice, Italy). I. Boccaccini, Gabriele, 1958-  
II. Ibba, Giovanni, 1962- III. Ehrenkrook, Jason von.  
IV. Waddell, James, 1938- V. Zurawski, Jason.

BS1830.J8E56 2009

229'.911 — dc22

2009013095