

# *The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr\**

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This article examines Justin's appeal to Gen 6.1–4 to explain the origins of pagan worship. In an innovative twist on earlier Jewish traditions, he proposes that the progeny of the fallen angels became demons who masquerade as deities and trick pagans into persecuting Christians. Justin's demonization of Greco-Roman religion contrasts both with his approach to Hellenistic philosophy and with his appeal to the disobedience of Adam and Eve to explain Jewish wickedness. Analysis of his demonology thus sheds light on his strategies for explaining similarities between Christianity and Greco-Roman culture as well as his understanding of the condition of the unsaved pagan as distinct from both Christians and Jews.

Throughout his works Justin Martyr equates the "gods of the nations" with demons (cf. LXX Ps 95.5) and explores the various ways in which they deceptively imitate the divine in order to lead unwary humans away

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from belief in the one God and his savior son. In one key passage, *2 Apology 5*, Justin describes the genesis of this lamentable situation. Drawing on the biblical account of the mingling of “sons of God” with “daughters of men” (Gen 6.1–4), he explains how the fallen angels inseminated human women with demonic offspring and how they enslaved humankind through trickery, coercion, and magic, encouraging them to worship the demons as gods.

The innovative nature of Justin’s assertion becomes clear when we consider the history of interpretation of Gen 6.1–4.<sup>1</sup> This infamously terse passage tells of strange happenings in the days before the flood:

When humans began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God [MT: בני האלהים; some LXX MSS: οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ] saw that the daughters of men were fair, and they took wives from them as they chose. . . . The *Nephilim* [MT: הנפלים; LXX: γίγαντες] were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men [MT: הגבורים; LXX: γίγαντες] of old, the men of renown. (Gen 6.1–4)

Our most ancient evidence for the exegesis and expansion of these verses occurs in the *Book of the Watchers*, a document within *1 Enoch* (ch. 1–36) that dates from the third or early second century B.C.E. Moving beyond Genesis’ comments about the sexual sins of the “sons of God” (here interpreted as angels), this early Jewish pseudepigraphon describes the disastrous effects of their unnatural union with the “daughters of men.” Not only does it decry the violence of their hybrid progeny and proclaim the punishment of all involved, but it also asserts that the fallen angels corrupted humankind through teachings of metalworking, cosmetics, magic, and celestial divination, thereby depicting angelic descent as the ultimate cause of evil on the earth.

Until the late fourth or early fifth century C.E., the *Book of the Watchers* played a significant role in shaping Jewish and Christian understand-

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Translations of Justin in this article are from ANF 1, ed. A. C. Coxe (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979).

1. For a survey, see Ferdinand Dexinger, “Judisch-christliche Nachgeschichte von Genesis 6,1–4,” in *Zur Aktualität des Alten Testaments: Festschrift für Georg Sauer zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer and Kurt Lüthi (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 155–75; L. R. Wickham, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI 2 in Early Christian Exegesis,” in *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis*, ed. J. Barr, W. A. M. Beuken, et al., *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 135–47.

ings of Gen 6.1–4.<sup>2</sup> When we survey the traditions that circulated prior to Justin Martyr, an interesting pattern emerges. The widespread influence of early Enochic pseudepigrapha can be inferred from the presence of explicit references to the writings of Enoch in Second Temple Jewish and New Testament literature (e.g., *Jub.* 4, esp. 4.17–19; *T. Sim.* 5.4; *T. Levi* 10.5, 14.1; *T. Dan* 5.6; *T. Naph.* 4.1; *T. Benj.* 9.1; Jude 14–15), and the popularity of the *Book of the Watchers* in particular is suggested by the many allusions to its version of the angelic descent myth (esp. Jude 6 and 2 Pet 2.9–10).<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, two of the most central concepts in the *Book of the Watchers* are consistently ignored or suppressed by the earliest authors who used this source or otherwise drew upon its traditions: (1) its assertion that the Watchers taught forbidden knowledge to humans and (2) its appeal to the fallen angels to explain the origins of human sin and suffering.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Apologies* of Justin Martyr, however, the motif of illicit angelic instruction resurfaces to play a pivotal role in the aetiology of human culture and its tragic distance from the divine. Just as the *Book of the Watchers* juxtaposes the teachings of the fallen angels with the revelations to Enoch in order to warn its readers against overzealous cosmological speculation,<sup>5</sup> so Justin adapts this motif to critique his pagan contemporaries. For him, the teachings of the fallen angels serve to explain the origins and continued practice of Greco-Roman religions: polytheistic

2. I explore the *Nachleben* of this tradition in detail in “What the Fallen Angels Taught: The Reception-History of the *Book of the Watchers* in Judaism and Christianity” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2002). See also James VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. J. VanderKam and W. Adler (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 84–87; Richard J. Bauckham, “The Fall of the Angels as the Source of Philosophy in Hermias and Clement of Alexandria,” *VC* 39 (1985): 316, 321–22; and William Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus*, DOS 26 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989), 114–16.

3. Reed, “What the Fallen Angels Taught,” 88–219; James VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for All Generations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 110–29, 143–47, 154–61, 170–80; idem, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch,” 60–88; Wickham, “Sons of God,” 143–45; and Bauckham, “Fall of the Angels,” 316, 319–21.

4. Reed, “What the Fallen Angels Taught,” 124–70.

5. See my extended argument to this effect in “Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6–16,” in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, ed. R. S. Boustan and A. Y. Reed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2004).

and idolatrous worship was propagated by the wicked angels and the evil spirits of their children, who are identified as φαῦλοι δαίμονες.

Justin's association of the fallen angels and their demonic progeny with the pagan pantheon initiates a new stage in the history of exegesis of Gen 6.1–4. Writing in the wake of the Bar Kokhba Revolt, Justin is the first known Christian author to rework this myth subsequent to the New Testament literature. His works also represent our earliest extant evidence for the myth's influence after the apparent rejection of the books of Enoch and the angelic interpretation of Gen 6.1–4 by rabbinic Jews.<sup>6</sup> Thereafter, a number of Christian thinkers—including Tatian, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Commodian, and Minucius Felix—would follow Justin in using the angelic descent myth to denounce pagan culture as demonic.<sup>7</sup>

With the aim of elucidating the significance of the angelic descent myth within Justin's own writings, this inquiry will explore its polemical function within his denunciation of Greco-Roman polytheism, its apologetic function within his defense of Christianity, and its anthropological function within his explication of the condition of the unsaved pagan. Most studies of Justin's demonological aetiology of paganism have explored this theme as it relates to his comparably positive attitudes toward Hellenistic philosophy, on the one hand, and the Greco-Roman discourse about δαίμονες and popular religiosity, on the other.<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt that these lines of research have been fruitful nor that these perspectives prove necessary for any inquiry into the topic. Nevertheless, I suggest that one cannot fully grasp the innovative character of Justin's aetiology of pagan worship, nor comprehend its surprisingly important place within his soteriology, without also investigating the ways in which he both borrows and departs from earlier Jewish traditions.

Likewise, Justin's views of the pagan past and present cannot be understood apart from a comparison with his attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. It is surely tempting to divorce the philosophical musings of the

6. P. S. Alexander, "Targumim and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God,'" *JJS* 23 (1972): 60–71; and Annette Yoshiko Reed, "From Asael to Šemiḥazah: 3 Enoch 5 (§§7–8) and the Jewish Reception-History of 1 Enoch," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8 (2001): 129–32.

7. Bauckham, "Fall of the Angels," 319–21, 323–25; and Wickham, "Sons of God," 135–47.

8. See the discussion of the history of scholarship in Oskar Skarsaune, "Judaism and Hellenism in Justin Martyr, Elucidated from His Portrait of Socrates," in *Geschichte–Tradition–Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, Band III: *Frühes Christentum*, ed. H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996), esp. 587–89. My inquiry attempts to fill some of the lacunae that Skarsaune there describes.

*Apologies* from the anti-Jewish rants of the *Dialogue with Trypho*, but we risk overlooking the points of intersection in his approaches to Judaism and Greco-Roman culture as they shaped his ideas about a Christian identity that stood in continuity and contrast to both. Insofar as demonology plays a key role in his conceptualization of the human condition, Justin's approach to the fallen angels is best seen in the broader context of his articulation of a genealogy of error that encompasses pagan and Jew alike.

Accordingly, this inquiry will approach Justin's demonological aetiology of paganism from multiple perspectives. I will begin with an analysis of 2 *Apology* 5, focusing on its relationship to earlier retellings of the angelic descent myth. Like the *Book of the Watchers*, Justin interprets Gen 6.1–4 as an account of the origins of sin and suffering whereby cosmic chaos and moral decline were initiated by the fallen angels. The reasons for this choice will be explored in the second section, which contrasts the very different ideas about evil's origins expressed in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Whereas Adam and Eve are nowhere mentioned in either of the *Apologies*, Justin here appeals to Genesis 2–3 to account for human wickedness. This twofold approach recalls earlier Jewish efforts to reconcile the explanations of sin and suffering in the story of Adam and Eve with the angelic descent myth (e.g., 2 *Baruch* 5–6), but it also helps to illumine Justin's distinctive views about the different status of pagans and Jews vis-à-vis Christian salvation: whereas Justin uses the sins of the primeval couple to explicate the nature of Jewish wickedness as willful disobedience, his retelling of the angelic descent myth functions to account for pagan error as the product of unwitting deception by the demonic mimesis of the divine.

In the next section I will return to Justin's two *Apologies* and explore how his theories about the demonic origins and inspiration of paganism function within his characterization of unsaved Gentiles and his views about the cosmic battle between Christ and the demons. This will occasion a contrast between his demonization of Greco-Roman religion and his positive comments about Hellenistic philosophy; here I will argue that the two ideas are more consonant than they first may seem and that both, moreover, involve strategies of appropriation and reinterpretation that are strikingly similar to what we find in Justin's approach to Jews and Judaism. I will conclude by considering the ramifications of this aetiology of pagan wickedness for Justin's coreligionists, suggesting that his theories about the demonic mimesis of the divine provided them with a powerful strategy for explaining apparent sameness as essential difference and, as such, encouraged them to live proudly as Christians in the hostile milieu of a predominantly pagan world.

## THE ANGELIC DESCENT MYTH IN 2 APOLOGY 5

Before exploring the place of the angelic descent myth within Justin's writings, it is useful to consider the retelling of Gen 6.1–4 in 2 *Apology* 5. Comparison with earlier Jewish versions helps to highlight the exegetical choices in Justin's version as well as to illuminate the character of his probable sources. On the one hand, we can see how he selectively integrates Jewish traditions that would resonate with the cultural expectations of a Greco-Roman audience. On the other hand, Justin's choices shed light on his own distinctive ideas about the nature of the sinfulness that proves particularly characteristic of pagans, in contrast to both Christians and Jews.

Although clearly dependent on LXX Gen 6.1–4, 2 *Apology* 5 presupposes extrabiblical developments in the tradition. Specifically, Justin's version of the angelic descent myth appears to adopt its purpose and structure from the *Book of the Watchers*<sup>9</sup> while integrating motifs from the *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs*, a Christian reworking of earlier Jewish testamentary sources.<sup>10</sup> In interpreting the descent of the Watchers as a transgression of the natural order of the cosmos, Justin follows both 1 *Enoch* 15–16 and *Testament of Naphtali* 3. He departs, however, from

9. Some scholars have suggested Christian sources for this tradition. Erwin Goodenough, for instance, posits Justin's dependence on a tradition "which had long been incorporated from Judaism to Christianity" and which also shaped the version of the myth in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* 8.12–18 and the possible reference to the myth in a fragment from Papias (*The Theology of Justin Martyr* [Jena: Frommann, 1923], 200; see also Skarsaune, "Judaism and Hellenism," 592). However, there is ample evidence for widespread use of Enochic pseudepigrapha by Christians from the first to third centuries C.E.—including explicit references to books of Enoch (e.g., Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum* 3) and direct quotations (e.g., 1 *Enoch* 1.9 in Jude 14–15; 1 *Enoch* 99.6–7 in Tertullian, *De idololatria* 4.2), as well as allusions that presuppose the status of Enochic books as scripture (e.g., Barnabus 4; Athenagoras, *Embassy for the Christians* 24; for a survey, see VanderKam, "1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch," 33–60). Especially in light of the numerous and significant parallels discussed below, I thus see no need to posit a Christian source to mediate these traditions to Justin. It is also significant that in his *Dialogue* Justin frequently cites Enoch as a paradigm of a righteous man living before and without the Torah. His name occurs in lists of pre-Sinaitic patriarchs (e.g., *Dial.* 45, 92), and it often seems to function as "shorthand" for the pre-Christian Christians in Jewish history (e.g., *Dial.* 23, 43).

10. Justin's familiarity with the *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs*, which itself depends on the *Book of the Watchers*, is suggested by the close relationship between Justin's works and the Christian interpolations in the *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs*, as convincingly established by Oskar Skarsaune; see his *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 253–55, 270–72, 281, 291, 344–45, 428–29.

the *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs* and other versions of the myth when exploring the ramifications of this antediluvian event. As in the *Book of the Watchers*, the brief summary of primordial history in *2 Apology 5* effectively implies that sinfulness did not originate from human disobedience but rather from the angels' deviance from their divinely designated responsibilities.

The retelling of the angelic descent myth in *2 Apology 5* is prefaced by a celebration of the τάξις of the cosmos created by God. Just as the nature poem in *1 Enoch 2–5* exhorts the reader to consider the orderliness of the heavenly luminaries (2.1), seasonal weather changes (2.1, 3; 3.1–4.1), and cycles of vegetation (5.1) as models for ethical steadfastness, so Justin here cites the elements of heaven, the fruitfulness of agricultural produce, and the predictable rotation of the seasons as evidence for the governance of divinely instituted natural law (*2 Apol.* 5.2; cf. *1 Enoch* 5.1–2). When describing the cosmic situation prior to the angel's descent, he focuses exclusively upon God's delineation of separate realms of human and angelic responsibility within his orderly creation. Whereas earthly things (τὰ ἐπίγεια) are subjected to human beings, "the care of humankind and the things under heaven [τὴν μὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ οὐρανῶν πρόνοιαν]" is entrusted to the angels (*2 Apol.* 5.2).

According to Justin, the harmonious relationship among humanity, creation, and the angels was soon shattered—not due to any human error but because of angelic sin: "But the angels [ἄγγελοι], transgressing this order [παραβάντες τήνδε τὴν τάξιν], succumbed to intercourse with women [γυναικῶν μίξειςιν ἠτήθησαν] and begat children, who are those called demons [οἱ λεγόμενοι δαίμονες; *2 Apol.* 5.3]."<sup>11</sup> In adopting the interpretation of angelic sin as a breach of cosmic order, Justin was no doubt influenced by Platonic precedents (esp. *Timaeus* 41ff.).<sup>12</sup> But at the same time *2 Apology 5* remains deeply indebted to early Jewish traditions.

Insofar as Justin here depicts the sins of the angels as a violation of cosmic harmony his approach evokes *Testament of Naphtali* 3.5, which denounces the Watchers for "departing from Nature's order." The correspondence with the *Book of the Watchers* is even closer. Most notably, *1 Enoch* 15 articulates the Watchers' sin in terms of their transgression of

11. As in *Jubilees*, the angels' transgression is here heightened by the positive nature of their intended relationship with the earth and humankind. Interestingly, Justin does not actually state that the angels descended to earth, let alone specify their original motivation for doing so, whether positive (like *Jubilees*) or negative (like the *Book of the Watchers*).

12. Heinrich Wey, *Die Funktionen der bösen Geister bei den griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts nach Christus* (Winterthur: Keller, 1957), 7–10.

the distinct roles that God intended for angels and humans respectively: God created the angels as immortal “celestial spirits” that dwell in heaven eternally, and he gave women only to mortal men (esp. *1 Enoch* 15.5–7). Although the Watchers sin through sexual impiety, the essence of their transgression was their choice not to follow their true nature but to act instead “like the children of earth” by co-opting the special prerogatives of those “who die and perish” (*1 Enoch* 15.3–4).

When describing the results of the angelic sin, *2 Apology* 5 similarly recalls the next passage in the *Book of the Watchers*, *1 Enoch* 15.8–16.1. There God foretells to Enoch the fate of the Watchers’ progeny. Corresponding to their dual nature as a mingling of spirit and flesh, the Giants will suffer a double destruction. Their bodies will be slaughtered as part of the Watchers’ antediluvian punishment (*1 Enoch* 15.8–10; also 10.9–12, 12.4–6), but their evil spirits (πνεύματα πονηρὰ) will roam the earth until the final judgment, when they will be annihilated alongside human sinners (*1 Enoch* 15.11–12; also 10.13–16, esp. 15). Within the *Book of the Watchers* the Giants thus function as an important component of the aetiology of sin provided by the angelic descent myth. Before the flood the fallen angels caused wickedness to proliferate upon the earth through their teachings and through their production of unnatural offspring. For these transgressions they are punished by imprisonment and by the physical slaughter of their children. Nevertheless, their causal role in promulgating sin continues even after the flood because the evil spirits (πνεύματα πονηρὰ) of their progeny still plague the earth to this day (*1 Enoch* 15.8–16.1). Similarly, Justin identifies the children of the angels as “demons,”<sup>13</sup> drawing upon the Greco-Roman concept of δαίμονες as intermediary figures who are neither as divine as the gods nor as lowly as humans.<sup>14</sup>

13. Justin’s innovation upon the early Jewish exegesis of Gen 6.1–4 is not the association of the Watchers’ sons with demons, as some scholars have suggested (e.g., Goodenough, *Theology of Justin Martyr*, 199; Arthur Droge, *Homer or Moses?* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989], 56). Rather, it is his equation of pagan gods with the fallen angels of Gen 6.1–4. This equation combines the *Book of the Watchers*’ notion that demons are the spirits of the Giants with the identification of the “gods of the nations” as δαίμονες in LXX Ps 95.5, but it transforms these traditions significantly by positing three distinct levels: the corrupted humans who worship idols, the demons who pretend to be gods, and the fallen angels who are ultimately responsible for orchestrating this farce.

14. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. J. Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 179–81; Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1984), 33–59; and R. P. C. Hanson, “The Christian Attitude to Pagan Religions Up to the Time of Constantine the Great,” in *Studies in Christian Antiquity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985), 164–65.

According to *2 Apol.* 5.4, the fallen angels then “enslaved [ἐδούλουσαν] the rest of the human race to themselves” in three ways: (1) “by magical writings [διὰ μαγικῶν γραφῶν],” (2) “by fears and the punishments that they occasioned,” and (3) “by teaching them to offer sacrifices and incense and libations [διὰ διδαχῆς θυμάτων καὶ θυμιαμάτων καὶ σπονδῶν], which they needed after they were enslaved [δουλωθῆναι] by lustful passions.” The enslavement of humankind through magic echoes the *Book of the Watchers*’ description of the illicit angelic instruction of humankind in sorcery, spells, and celestial divination (*1 Enoch* 7.1, 8.3, 9.7),<sup>15</sup> while the assertion that they instructed humankind in improper modes of worship is consistent with that text’s emphasis on the corrupting results of their teachings (esp. *1 Enoch* 8.1–3).

For including improper worship among the causes of human enslavement to the fallen angels and their sons, Justin finds some precedent in *1 Enoch* 19.1. Here the angel Uriel shows Enoch the prison of “the angels who had intercourse [μιγέντες] with women” and warns him that “their spirits [πνεύματα], taking on many forms, will harm [λυμνίεται] humankind and lead them astray [πλανήσει], to sacrifice to demons [ἐπιθύειν τοῖς δαίμονιοις], until the great judgment.” Notably, the fallen angels are not directly equated with demons in *1 Enoch* 19.1; their spirits simply encourage humankind to worship demons. Likewise, *2 Apology* 5 suggests that the angels taught the practice of improper worship to humankind, who then used this knowledge to serve their demonic sons.<sup>16</sup> Here too Justin seems to depend upon an early Jewish source,<sup>17</sup> even as he

15. On the association between magic and δαίμονες in Greco-Roman tradition, as most famously expressed in Plato’s *Symposium* 202e–203a, see Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. F. Philip, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 23–24; and R. Gordon, “Imagining Greek and Roman Magic,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 178–81.

16. Admittedly, Justin’s categories do not always remain clearly delineated. *2 Apol.* 5.4 suggests that the fallen angels play some role in improper worship, insofar as they institute this worship for their own benefit. Likewise, *2 Apol.* 5.5 identifies the pagan gods with both “the angels and those demons who had been begotten by them,” and *2 Apol.* 5.6 asserts that the angels gave the names of pagan gods to both themselves and their children. Although direct and indirect levels of causality sometimes become mingled when Justin explores the present-day ramifications of the antediluvian origin of idolatry from angelic descent, the distinction between the wicked angels and demons remains significant. See, for instance, *2 Apol.* 7.1 where Justin refers to three distinct categories of wicked beings whose punishment God defers for the sake of Christians: οἱ φαῦλοι ἄγγελοι καὶ δαίμονες καὶ ἄνθρωποι.

17. Given the widespread use of the Enochic books by early Christians and their probable rejection by rabbinic Jews around this time (see Alexander, “Targumim and

selects traditions that resonate with the cultural expectations of a non-Jewish audience (whether pagan or Christian). Most notably, his description of the progeny of angels and human women tacitly grounds its plausibility in Greek myths about the fornication of gods and mortals such that the immoral deeds that poets attribute to the gods can function, for Justin, both as proof for the spurious nature of these myths and as evidence for the true events that they distort.<sup>18</sup>

The most unusual parallel with the *Book of the Watchers* is Justin's use of the motif of illicit angelic instruction to explain human wickedness. The *Book of the Watchers* blames Asael and other Watchers for teaching "wrongdoing and sins upon the earth and all manner of guile in the land" (9.7; 13.2) and revealing to humankind "all manner of sins" (9.8), so that the whole earth became devastated by their teachings (10.8).<sup>19</sup> Similarly, in 2 *Apol.* 5.4 Justin not only accuses the fallen angels of teaching idolatry and polytheism to humankind but further asserts that they sowed "murders [φόνους], wars [πολέμους], adulteries [μοιχείας], intemperate deeds [ἀκολασίας], and all wickedness [πᾶσαν κακίαν]."

As noted above, the angelic descent myth functions as the central aetiology of sin within the *Book of the Watchers*, but later interpreters would suppress the idea that humans were corrupted by the teachings of the fallen angels, whether through omission or reinterpretation.<sup>20</sup> This

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Early Exegesis," 60–71)—as well as the widespread Christian references to Enoch as a pre-Christian Christian (e.g., *Dial.* 23; see also Heb 11; 1 Clem 9–10; Irenaeus *Adv. haer.* 4.16.2; Tertullian, *Answer to the Jews* 4)—I see no need to assume that Justin himself would have perceived the *Book of the Watchers* as a Jewish as opposed to Christian text. His use of this text thus differs from his integration of other sources that were more clearly marked as Jewish, such as the Jewish scriptures (which he must make some effort to claim as Christian) and the midrashic traditions that he cites to contest throughout his *Dialogue*.

18. Skarsaune, "Judaism and Hellenism," 593; and Peter Widdicombe, "Justin Martyr, Allegorical Interpretation, and the Greek Myths," *SP* 31 (1997): 234–35.

19. More specifically, human impiety is there facilitated by Asael's instruction in the arts of metal working for making "swords of iron and breast plates of bronze and every weapon for war" (*1 Enoch* 8.1).

20. There are only two exceptions in the early Jewish literature, *Jubilees* and the Enochic *Similitudes*. In the *Similitudes*, an enigmatic Jewish text usually dated to the mid-first century C.E., the motif of illicit angelic instruction is radically expanded to include knowledge of writing and of the powerful oaths with which God created the cosmos (*1 Enoch* 69). The approach of *Jubilees*, a text from the second century B.C.E. that is closely aligned with the early Enochic tradition, would be more consistent with the later trajectory of development. Although noting the sexual sins of the Watchers, *Jubilees* omits all references to illicit angelic instruction from its retelling of antediluvian history (see esp. *Jub* 5.1–11) and in its account of Noah's testament to his sons about the sins that caused the flood (*Jub* 7.20–33). Only later does *Jubilees*

trend is already evident in a group of related works from the second century B.C.E. that constitute our earliest evidence for the influence of this pseudepigraphon. In different ways *Jubilees*, the *Epistle of Enoch*, and the *Book of Dreams* neutralize the *Book of the Watchers*' radical assertion that human sinfulness has its origin not in primeval human disobedience nor an evil inclination in the human heart but rather in a rebellious breach in the harmony of the supernatural sphere, with the descent of the angels and their revelation of forbidden secrets to humankind. The *Epistle of Enoch*, for instance, stresses explicitly that "sin was not sent upon the earth, but man himself created it" (*1 Enoch* 98.4). Even more relevant for our purposes is the way in which the author of *Jubilees* achieves the same effect. Here the angelic descent myth is narratively subordinated to a different aetiology of evil: the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2–3).<sup>21</sup>

Pointing to the passing reference to the Garden in the *Book of the Watchers*, Martha Himmelfarb has proposed that its attribution of the origins of human sin to the fallen angels already answers an aetiological interpretation of the deeds of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2–3, with the aim of shifting the blame from the first humans onto wicked angels.<sup>22</sup> In

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allude to any illicit instruction by the Watchers, in the context of Cainan's discovery of stones inscribed with magical writings (*Jub* 8.3; cf. *1 Enoch* 8.1–3). Some association of the Watchers and magic remains, but the element of instruction has been effectively displaced from the myth of antediluvian angelic descent. The notion that Asael/Azazel taught humankind to sin may also be present in 4Q180, but its fragmentary state makes any conclusions difficult. See further Reed, "What the Fallen Angels Taught," 124–70, esp. 128–39, 160–63.

21. In his survey of different approaches to the origins of evil in the apocalyptic literature John J. Collins outlines the following as prevalent aetiologies for evil in Second Temple Judaism: (1) the sins of Adam and Eve as described in the biblical account and later expansions (esp. *2 Baruch*; *4 Ezra*); (2) the corruption of humankind by the fallen angels as depicted in the *Book of the Watchers*; (3) Daniel's equation of evil with primordial chaos, based on ancient Mesopotamian myths; (4) the dualistic Two Spirits doctrine, which is prevalent in the literature of the Qumran community and attributes the origins of evil to the all-powerful God (cf. *2 Sam* 19.9; *Sir* 33.14–15); and (5) the idea of the evil inclination in the human heart (see, e.g., *4 Ezra*). The *Book of the Watchers*' version seems to have been notably less influential than other aspects of the book. See further John J. Collins, "The Origin of Evil in Apocalyptic Literature," in *Seers, Sybils, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 292–98.

22. Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 74; also James VanderKam, "The Angel Story in the Book of Jubilees," in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E. Chazon and M. E. Stone (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 153.

*1 Enoch* 12–36 the Garden is one of many stops on Enoch’s tours of heaven and earth. When Enoch arrives there, his guide Raphael informs him, “This is the tree of knowledge of which your father of old and your mother of old ate; and they learned knowledge, and their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked, and they were driven out of the garden” (*1 Enoch* 32.6). Not only is the Tree of Life displaced to another location (see *1 Enoch* 24–25), but Raphael’s terse summary of Genesis 2–3 strikingly neglects to mention the Serpent, God’s command not to eat the fruit of the Tree, and the disobedience of Adam and Eve—the very details that transform this tale into an aetiology of human sin.

By contrast, *Jubilees* includes an extensive retelling of the story of Adam and Eve (*Jub.* 3), thereby implying that sin originated with *human* disobedience. This idea is reinforced by its version of the angelic descent myth, which begins with the Watchers being sent to earth by God to “teach humankind and to do what is just and upright” (4.15; see 5.6). These angelic beings later become corrupted by their lust for human women (4.22, 5.1), and they sire demonic progeny who commit violence and lead humanity astray (7.27, 10.1–9). But as John J. Collins rightly notes, “they are not ultimately responsible for human sin, since Adam fell long before they came on the scene.”<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, the “Animal Apocalypse” in the *Book of Dreams* begins its account of humanity’s decline with a transgression of wholly human origins; even as it follows the *Book of the Watchers* in downplaying the importance of Adam and Eve, the “Animal Apocalypse” stresses that the first and paradigmatic sin was Cain’s murder of his brother Abel (*1 Enoch* 85.5). When first Asael and then the other Watchers later descend to earth (*1 Enoch* 86.1–6), they cause wickedness to proliferate further, but here too human corruption has already commenced.

Other early Jewish exegetes (see esp. *2 Baruch* 56) would similarly eschew this aspect of the *Book of the Watchers*, turning again to the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to explain the origins of human sin and suffering.<sup>24</sup> Prior to Justin Martyr, the Jewish and Christian writers who used this text tended to neutralize its radical approach to the question of evil by adapting its treatment of the Watchers as archetypal sinners, with special appeal to its extrabiblical elaboration of their punishments. Some include the Watchers alongside humans in lists of paradigmatic sinners (e.g., CD 2.14–3.1; 2 Pet 2.4) or present them as negative exemplars of men who fall prey to lust (e.g., *T. Reu.* 5.4–6; *T. Naph.*

23. Collins, “Origin of Evil,” 291.

24. VanderKam, “Angel Story,” 153–54.

3.5). Others cite their imprisonment as proof of the inevitable punishment of the wicked by God (e.g., Jude 6; 2 Pet 2.4; see also 1 Pet 3.19–20; Irenaeus *Adv. haer.* 1.10.1–3).

Justin's version thus represents a striking departure from prior transformations of the Enochic myth of angelic descent, which remain reticent to accept the *Book of the Watchers'* assertion that the antediluvian descent of the Watchers accounts for the origins of human wickedness. Whereas these sources depict the sin and punishment of the fallen angels as comparable to the deeds and fate of wicked humans, the *Book of the Watchers* and 2 *Apology* 5 both assert their active corruption of humankind, stressing their pedagogical role in promulgating sin. Moreover, in the latter Justin explains how the good creation of God deteriorated into human sinfulness, but he makes no mention of the primeval couple. In fact, Adam and Eve nowhere occur in 1 or 2 *Apology*.

This is especially surprising since Justin refers to Genesis 2–3 quite frequently within the *Dialogue with Trypho*. In that book Justin argues to his Jewish interlocutor that Christ redeems humankind from the sins of Adam and Eve; their transgression in the Garden of Eden not only engendered death but also remains paradigmatic of all human disobedience to God (e.g., *Dial.* 88, 94, 98, 124). The contrast with 2 *Apology's* account of the origins of evil is striking. There Justin's summary of primeval history progressed directly from a description of God's orderly creation of the world to an account of the breach in cosmic order caused by the angelic transgression of their proper role of overseeing the earth. By "skipping" the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden, 2 *Apol.* 5 effectively omits any hint of human culpability in contributing to the distance between corrupt humankind and their beneficent creator.

Why might Justin appeal to different aetiologies of sin in the *Dialogue* and in the *Apologies*?<sup>25</sup> I suggest that the variance in approach reflects the different audiences and foci of these texts and, moreover, presupposes a twofold genealogy of error that corresponds to his view of the different status of Jews and pagans vis-à-vis Christian salvation.<sup>26</sup> Each of Justin's

25. Contrast, e.g., the approach of L. W. Barnard, who conflates the two into a description of Justin's understanding of the human condition in general (*Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 115).

26. Interestingly, the focus on different critical events in the early history of human sinfulness appears to correspond to a focus on different corrupting figures. Although the terms διάβολος and σατάν occur often in Justin's *Dialogue* (17 and 8 times respectively), they only occur in one passage in his apologies: 1 *Apol.* 28.1, where Justin states that the "prince of the evil demons" is called both "Satan" and the "devil."

works is explicitly rooted in specific aims that are ostensibly oriented towards particular non-Christian audiences.<sup>27</sup> *1 and 2 Apology* purport to address prominent Romans, and Justin here defends Christian beliefs in terms of their similarities with Greco-Roman values while promoting Christianity as the true philosophy. Whoever the intended audience of his *Dialogue*, it proves significant that his dialogue partner Trypho is a Jewish refugee from the Bar Kokhba Revolt. Accordingly, the *Dialogue* is primarily concerned to define the nature of Christian piety through an extended contrast with Jewish sinfulness that attempts to “prove” that the church is the true Israel and that Christians are the legitimate heirs to the biblical heritage of the Jews.

When we examine these works together, the contours of a wider project begin to emerge. Polemical and apologetic concerns may occasion each of his works, but in the process Justin begins to articulate a distinctly Christian identity, the borders of which are defined against three different categories of “others”: pagans, Jews, and heretics. For our present purposes only the first two categories prove directly pertinent. Justin can dismiss heretics as derivative in belief and recent in origin, but his approach to pagans and Jews must proceed with more historiographical caution.<sup>28</sup> Due to the antiquity of both Judaism and Greco-Roman culture, he is forced to negotiate between apologetic claims about Christianity’s essential continuity with prior human history and triumphalistic assertions of the essential discontinuity that makes this faith unique—and uniquely salvific. The tension between antiquity and innovation necessitates an explanation of the patterns of sameness and difference that exist between Christians and pagans, on the one hand, and Christians and Jews, on the other. To understand how the myth of angelic descent functions within Justin’s writings it is thus necessary to compare his descrip-

27. I should here stress “ostensibly.” The majority of scholars deduce from the *Apologies*’ addressees that these works were intended for a primarily pagan audience, and this strikes me as a reasonable assumption—not least because of the dynamics discussed below. With regard to the *Dialogue*, the question of audience proves more difficult; Jews, Christians, and pagan “God-fearers” have all been offered as options. See, e.g., the discussions in Tessa Rajak, “Talking at Trypho: Christian Apologetic as Anti-Judaism in Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*,” in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. M. Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 79–80; Judith Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 107–8; and Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 258–59, 429, 433.

28. Justin’s heresiology is, of course, tightly tied to his demonology as well; esp. *1 Apol.* 26, 56, 66.1, 63.1; *Dial* 7, 82.3.

tion of the origins and nature of pagan wickedness with his approach to the origins and nature of Jewish wickedness.

#### ADAM, EVE, AND THE JEWS IN THE *DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO*

Unlike the two *Apologies*, the *Dialogue* is primarily concerned to define the nature of Christian piety through an extended contrast with Jewish sinfulness.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Justin's focus on pagans in the *Apologies* leads him to exploit the explanatory power of the myth of angelic descent, he here appeals to the acts of Adam and Eve as his primary aetiology of sin. Like many other Jews and Christians of his time, he depicts the transgressions of the first humans as facilitated by the demonic influence of the Serpent, who is identified with Satan (*Dial* 88, 103, 125). Nevertheless, the *Dialogue* makes much effort to highlight the role of human culpability in the origin and continuation of earthly evils.<sup>30</sup>

Even as Justin treats Adam and Eve's transgression as representative of all subsequent human wickedness, his explication of the unique condition of the Jews among humankind suggests that this primordial sin of disobedience proves particularly paradigmatic for them. Within Justin's schema of salvation history the Jewish relationship with God is distinguished by their exceptional hard-heartedness; despite God's repeated attempts to guide them towards his will, the Jews respond with chronic, willful disobedience. The story of Jewish history in the *Dialogue* is a story of sin and punishment that inverts the Deuteronomistic principle of historiography with shocking anti-Judaism (see esp. *Dial.* 132). All of the traditional emblems of Jewish chosenness are here transformed into signs of this nation's exceptional waywardness.

Justin develops this characterization of the Jews most forcefully in his explanations of why Christians are pious even though they do not observe the Torah and, conversely, why Jews are impious even when they

29. On the depiction of Jews in Justin's *Apologies*, see Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 177–82.

30. In the words of Barnard: "Justin did not believe in inherited guilt or original sin. Adam's transgression is mentioned as marking the origin of human sin and death but not the cause of it during history. . . . Being made like unto Adam men work out death for themselves through their power of moral choice" (*Justin Martyr*, 115). Furthermore, in Justin's appeals to this biblical tale one can discern an attempt to subordinate the acknowledgement of the corrupting influence of Satan to assertion of the free will of the first humans (see, e.g., *Dial.* 88, 94, 102, 124, 141).

do. He asserts that God gave the Jews laws concerning “the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short all the feasts” not because of their chosen status among humankind but “on account of your transgressions and hard-heartedness [σκληροκαρδίαν]” (*Dial* 18.2; see also 11, 23, 43, 44, 46, 92). Citing the most venomous prophetic denunciations of Israel,<sup>31</sup> Justin interprets circumcision as a punishment aimed at separating this defiant nation from all others (*Dial* 19, 92). He attributes a similarly tainted origin to the Jewish dietary laws: “You were commanded to abstain from certain kinds of food, in order that you might keep God before your eyes while you ate and drank, seeing that you were prone and very ready to depart from his knowledge” (*Dial*. 20).<sup>32</sup>

For Justin, the consistent failure of these measures underlines the Jewish propensity for disobeying God. He argues that the chronic disobedience of the Jews culminates in their rejection of Jesus and their causal role in his death (*Dial*. 16.4, 17.1, 32.3, 93.4, 103.2, 104.1, 133.6; also *1 Apol.* 35.6, 38.7–8, 40.6). This sin prompts the direst of punishments: the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. and the expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem after the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 135 C.E. (*Dial*. 25.5, 26.1, 108.3; also *1 Apol.* 32.4–6, 47–49, 53.2–3).<sup>33</sup> Justin describes these events with triumphalistic glee: “God, who foreknew, was aware that your nation would *deserve* expulsion from Jerusalem and that none would be permitted to enter into it” (*Dial*. 92; also *1 Apol.* 47).<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps most telling is the way in which Justin differentiates between

31. Interestingly, when Trypho asks Justin why he quotes so heavily from the prophets, he twists this too into evidence for the chronic disobedience of the Jews: since the prophets proclaim the same truth as the Torah, the fact that God was forced to send so many new messengers to proclaim the eternal truths further demonstrates how persistently the Jews disobeyed him throughout their history (*Dial* 27).

32. See further *Dial* 46. For a consideration of some of the possible “answers” to such challenges by rabbinic Jews, see Marc Hirshman, *A Rivalry of Genius: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretation in Late Antiquity*, trans. B. Stein (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 42–66.

33. For a discussion of this theme and its sources, see Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 288–95.

34. In Justin’s schema what is punitive for the Jews simultaneously achieves a pedagogical purpose among non-Jews: “God enjoined you to keep the Sabbath and imposed on you other precepts for a sign . . . on account of your unrighteousness and that of your fathers . . . for the sake of the nations, lest his name be profaned among them; therefore he permitted some of you to remain alive” (*Dial* 21). This functions as an important component of Justin’s inversion of the chosenness of the Jews towards supersessionist aims; see further Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 175–76.

the pagan and Jewish relationships with the demonic realm. Consistent with his assertions in *2 Apology 5*, he presupposes throughout the *Dialogue* that pagan religion is demonically inspired (*Dial.* 30, 83, 91), repeatedly quoting or paraphrasing LXX Ps 95.5 (“All the gods of the nations are demons [πάντες οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἔθνῶν δαιμόνια]”; *Dial* 55, 73, 79, 83; also *1 Apol.* 41).<sup>35</sup> As in *1* and *2 Apology*, demonic activity among the nations is here characterized by their deception of unwary pagans (see esp. *Dial.* 69–70).

Trypho is consistently depicted as agreeing with Justin on these points (e.g., *Dial* 55). His only point of contention concerns the demons’ origins. In *Dialogue* 79<sup>36</sup> he complains to Justin: “The utterances of God are holy, but your expositions are mere contrivances [τετεχνασμέναι] . . . indeed, even blasphemies [βλάσφημοι], since you assert that angels acted wickedly and apostatized from God [πονηρευσαμένους καὶ ἀποστάντας τοῦ θεοῦ].”<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, both Jew and Christian concur that the pagan condition is marked by their worship of the “idols of demons” instead of the one God. Even as he denounces the Jews, Justin thus affirms the immorality of the pagans: “If those who are under this Law appear to be under a curse for not having observed all of its requirements, how much more shall all the nations—which practice idolatry, seduce youths, and commit other crimes—appear to be under a curse?” (*Dial* 95).

Jews who piously observe the Law may be superior to non-Christian Gentiles, but for Justin this is an exceptional case of a much more pernicious pattern. Not only have the Jews continually disobeyed God’s commands

35. Contrast MT Ps 96.5: “The gods of the nations are *idols* [עֲלִילִים].”

36. This is the only explicit reference to the fallen angels of Gen 6.1–4 within the *Dialogue*. There may, however, be other allusions to these figures. In *Dial* 100, for instance, Justin refers to “the serpent, and those angels and men who are like him” and in *Dial* 45 “the Serpent that sinned from the beginning and the angels who were like him.” Some references seem to mingle Satan’s rebellion from God, which predated his temptation of Eve in the form of the Serpent, and the descent of the angels, which Genesis describes in the context of the flood (e.g., *Dial.* 76 where Justin refers to “Satan and his angels,” paraphrasing Matt 25.41 [τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ]). However, Justin clearly distinguishes between Satan’s fall “from the beginning” and the later descent of the angels, as described in *2 Apology 5*—only grouping them to express the content of the present-day demonic population and to stress that their distance from God results from the angels’ own free will, which he repeatedly affirms when stressing the free will of humanity (e.g., *Dial* 102, 141).

37. Goodenough, *Theology of Justin Martyr*, 199–200, notes the lack of any clear impetus for Trypho’s comments and offers an unverifiable yet tantalizing explanation, suggesting that this passage once contained a more detailed reference to the fallen angels that was effaced by later copyists after the orthodox rejection of *1 Enoch* and the angelic interpretation of Gen 6.1–4 in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E.

but they have deliberately chosen to align themselves with the demonic against the divine. Justin claims that this paramount act of deviance against God is exemplified by the supposedly widespread Jewish adoption of pagan idolatry, an assertion that he buttresses with prophetic proof texts which accuse Israel of “acting like the nations.”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, he explains the Jewish Temple and sacrificial cult as divine measures intended to curtail this penchant for idolatry. According to Justin, God “enjoined them also to offer sacrifices, as if to his name, in order that you might not serve idols” (*Dial.* 19; see also 22, 92). The supposed failure of God’s special punitive and pedagogical efforts only serves to reinforce his view that the Jews always strayed from him (*Dial.* 46, 73, 132, 135), even going so far as to sacrifice their own children to the demons (*Dial.* 19, 27, 73, 133; cf. LXX Ps 105.37).

Despite their shared practice of idolatry, Justin thus emphasizes the different preconditions of Jewish and pagan wickedness: one expects pagans to worship the demons that are their own gods, but the Jews defiantly choose to stray from the true God who is everywhere proclaimed in their own scriptures. The essential difference between the two groups is most starkly expressed by their roles in the persecution of Christians. We have seen above how the *Apologies* attribute pagan hostility to Christians to demonic influence (e.g., *1 Apol.* 5; *2 Apol.* 1.2, 12). In the *Dialogue*, however, it is the Jews who exert a corrupting influence on pagans. Most notably, Justin accuses them not only of crucifying Christ but also of dispatching messengers to encourage the rejection of Christianity throughout the world. In *Dial.* 17 he alleges that they sent out “from Jerusalem chosen men throughout all the land to say that the atheistic heresy [ἀίρεσιν ἄθεον] of the Christians had sprung up and to recount those things that all who did not know us now speak against us” (see also 26, 96, 108). Moreover, it is here made explicit that the Jews’ ultimate culpability for Christian persecution encompasses the hostile actions of all non-Jews: “You are thus the cause, not only of your own unrighteousness, but indeed that of *all other people.*”

38. Specifically, he quotes (1) Deut 32.17: “They sacrificed to demons which were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come in of late, whom your fathers had never dreaded” (*Dial.* 119); (2) Isa 65.11–12: “You who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune [LXX: τῷ δαίμονι; for δαίμων as “fate” see, e.g., *Soph. Oed. Tyr.* 828] and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes, and chose what I did not delight in” (*Dial.* 135); and (3) Ps 106.37 (= LXX Ps 105.37): “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons [MT: לִשְׂרִיִּים; LXX: τοῖς δαιμονίοις]” (*Dial.* 19, 27, 73, 133).

In the *Dialogue* Justin goes so far as to propose that the Jews impact the activities of Christ's supernatural enemies. According to Justin, "punishments even to death have been inflicted on us by demons [ὕπὸ τῶν δαιμονίων] and by the host of the devil [τῆς στρατιᾶς τοῦ διαβόλου], through the service ministered to them *by you* [διὰ τῆς ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἐκείνοις γεγενημένης ὑπηρεσίας]" (*Dial.* 131.2). Just as his interpretation of Jewish history inverts the Deuteronomistic approach to Israel's sins and punishments, so Justin here twists the traditional Jewish association of Israel with the angels by paralleling the corrupting influence of the Jews with the actions of the fallen angels and their demonic progeny.<sup>39</sup>

### PAGANS, DEMONS, AND THE LOGOS IN THE *APOLOGIES*

When viewed solely in the context of the relationship between pagans and Christians, Justin's theory of the demonic origins of polytheism is a radical indictment of Greco-Roman culture.<sup>40</sup> Although the polemical power of this origin myth cannot be denied, comparison with his approach to Judaism in the *Dialogue* exposes his aetiology of pagan sinfulness as strangely sympathetic. Moreover, such a comparison suggests that Justin's references to early human history in the *Apologies* are deliberately selective. Seen in this context, *2 Apology* 5 aims to explain not the origins of human sinfulness *per se* but the origins of *pagan* wickedness more specifically. Jews may need redemption from their propensity to repeat the disobedience of Adam and Eve, but the experience of pagans is characterized by another type of enslavement whose origins also lie in primordial history but somewhat later: the enslavement of humankind by the angels who descended before the flood and by the demonic progeny born of their impure union with human women.

Even as it draws upon an earlier Jewish text that locates the origins of evil in antediluvian angelic sin, *2 Apology* 5 radically transforms the significance of the myth. In part, Justin's approach parallels texts such as *Jubilees* and *3 Baruch*, both of which combine the biblical explanation of the human origins of sin in Genesis 2–3 with the supernatural aetiology suggested by the *Book of the Watchers*. Whereas these texts seek to reassert humanity's ultimate responsibility for their own wickedness,

39. The single exception is *1 Apol.* 63, which states that Christ "endured all the sufferings that the demons instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon him."

40. See further Elaine Pagels, "Christian Apologists and the 'Fall of the Angels': An Attack on Roman Political Power?" *HTR* 78 (1985): 301–25.

Justin's version of the angelic descent myth in *2 Apology* ironically achieves the opposite effect, albeit with a limited scope: it effectively downplays pagan responsibility for their sins by excusing their practice of idolatry, misunderstanding of Christianity, and persecution of Christians as products of their ignorance of the demonic powers that control their irrational actions.<sup>41</sup>

This apparently paradoxical aim is consonant with the immediate context of Justin's retelling of the angelic descent myth in *2 Apology* 5: this text begins by describing the persecution of Christians under Urbicus (1.1; also 2.1–20). Despite the horror of the events that occasioned his writing, Justin meticulously avoids blaming the Romans directly for the violence against Christians. He emphatically explains that the persecution of Christians is actually the fault of “the foul demons [φᾶυλοι δαίμονες] who hate us and who keep such people as these [i.e., those who initiated the persecutions] in subjection to themselves” (1.2; see also 12).

When Justin then glorifies Christians who fearlessly face martyrdom secure in their faith that death will free them from oppression by “evil rulers [πονηρῶν δεσποτῶν],” he is forced to explain why they do not simply choose to kill themselves and return their saved souls to God. The answer lies in the essential goodness of God and his creation: “We have been taught that God did not make the world aimlessly, but for the sake of the human race” (*2 Apol.* 4). Justin's retelling of the angelic descent myth follows directly upon this assertion and functions to explain how injustice nevertheless came to hold sway.

Just as fallen angels were originally responsible for the introduction of wicked ways to humankind, so the continued pagan misunderstanding and persecution of Christians results from the bad judgment that attends their enslavement to evil demons. For Justin, this explanation is even corroborated by pagan literature: “the poets [ποιηταί] and mythologists [μυθολόγοι], not knowing that it was the angels [τοὺς ἀγγέλους] and the demons begotten by them [τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν γεννηθέντας δαίμονας] who did these things . . . ascribed them to God [θεὸν] himself and to those who were accounted to be sons [υἱοὺς] from him” (*2 Apol.* 5.5). Even the

41. There is a notable—and ultimately unresolved—tension in Justin's theology between determinism and free will. Justin is aware that the determinism of demonic manipulation threatens his assertion of the fairness of God's retributive punishment of human sinners in the coming age (*2 Apol.* 6). Moreover, he is at pains to distance himself from the Stoic doctrine of Fate (*2 Apol.* 6). See further Hans Conzelmann, *Gentiles – Jews – Christians: Polemics and Apologetics in the Greco-Roman Era*, trans. M. Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 295–96; and Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 115–16.

names of the gods can be traced to the fallen angels, since “whatever name each of the angels had given to himself and his children, it was by that name that they called them” (2 *Apol.* 5.6).

That is not to say, of course, that pagans are not ultimately culpable for their wicked deeds. They are merely culpable in different ways and for different reasons than the Jews. The exact nature of their responsibility is explored in the rest of 2 *Apolology* and, in more detail, in his earlier apology. Although 1 *Apolology* does not recount the origins of the demons, it does explain their influence upon the pagans in much the same terms as in 2 *Apolology*: it is due to demonic trickery that pagans worship idols, despite the fact that they are “soulless and dead, and have not the form of God” (1 *Apol.* 9). The names of the so-called gods are really the names of demons (1 *Apol.* 5; 9) who enslave humans to them by means of magic and dream visions (1 *Apol.* 14) and cause wickedness on the earth (1 *Apol.* 10). Moreover, “since ancient times these evil demons, effecting apparitions of themselves, committed adultery with women [γυναῖκας ἐμοίχευσαν] and corrupted children [παῖδας διέφθειραν] and showed fearful sights to men [φόβητρα ἀνθρώποις ἔδειξαν]” (1 *Apol.* 5). The demons even misrepresent Christianity in the hopes of deceiving humanity and leading them astray from salvation (1 *Apol.* 14, 54, 56, 62), and they manipulate pagans to persecute Christians (1 *Apol.* 5).

How, then, can pagans free themselves from demonic enslavement and align themselves with the divine? As in the *Dialogue* (esp. 30, 49, 78, 121, 125, 131), Justin’s two *Apologies* proclaim Christ’s unique power over the demons. According to Justin, “Christ was made man” for two interconnected reasons: “for the sake of believing people and for the destruction of the demons” (2 *Apol.* 6).<sup>42</sup> Although the incarnation signaled the first deathblow against the earthly reign of the demons, the victory is not yet complete. The current state of affairs represents an interim period between Christ’s two advents (esp. 1 *Apol.* 52). Drawing upon the *Book of the Watchers*’ description of the two stages in God’s punishment of the Watchers and their sons (1 *Enoch* 10.9–16, 12.4–6, 15.8–12),<sup>43</sup> Justin

42. As in the *Dialogue*, Justin here argues that the incarnation particularly facilitates *pagan* conversion, since it is predetermined that “the Gentile nations who were not looking for him should worship him, but the Jews who always expected him should not recognize him when he came” (1 *Apol.* 49).

43. The early Enochic tradition of an interim period of imprisonment for the fallen angels appears already in the Epistle of Jude (v. 6), a book whose dependence on the *Book of the Watchers* is clear from its direct quotation of a verse from this book (1 *Enoch* 1.9) as words that “Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied” (Jude 14–15). Cf. 2 Pet. 2.4; also *Sib. Or.* 1.88–103. See further Reed, “What the Fallen Angels Taught,” 150–53.

explains that the demons now “have been shut up in eternal fire” but only later will they “suffer their just punishment and penalty” (2 *Apol.* 8; also 1 *Apol.* 45).

For Justin, Christ’s empowerment of present-day believers against demons is most powerfully demonstrated by the unique efficacy of exorcism in the name of Christ. Presupposing that his pagan audience is aware of the “numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world and in your city,” he boasts that Christians have been “exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ . . . driving the possessing devils out of the men, even though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists” (2 *Apol.* 6). This interim manifestation of Christ’s power prefigures his final eschatological victory over both the demons and their human puppets: “For if they are even now overthrown by men through the name of Jesus Christ, this is an intimation of the punishment in eternal fire which will be inflicted on them and those who serve them” (2 *Apol.* 8).<sup>44</sup>

The *Apologies* also describe another important facet of Christ’s soteriological activity. Projecting the cosmic drama of salvation into the realm of human consciousness, Justin here celebrates the role of reason in loosening the bonds of demonic enslavement. This theme comes through most clearly in 1 *Apol.* 5. Here Justin asserts that pagans persecute Christians not only because of the “instigation of foul demons [μάστιγι δαιμόνων φαύλων]” but also because they “yield to unreasoning passion [ἀλόγῳ πάθει].” Moreover, he deems irrational men particularly amenable to demonic influence; it was precisely “those who did not judge the actions done with reason [οἱ λόγῳ τὰς γινομένας πράξεις οὐκ ἔκρινον]” who were “carried away by fear and, not knowing that the demons were evil [μὴ ἐπιστάμενοι δαίμονας εἶναι φαύλους], called them by the name of gods.”<sup>45</sup>

To make the point about the role of irrationality in facilitating the demonic enslavement of pagans, 1 *Apol.* 5 also appeals to a positive example. Even though most pagans continue to be deceived by the demons, the eminently reasonable Socrates was able to see these so-called gods for what they really are.<sup>46</sup> Thus according to Justin, he “endeavored, by true reason [λόγῳ ἀληθεῖ] and examination . . . to deliver humanity from the demons [ἀπάγειν τῶν δαιμόνων τοὺς ἀνθρώπους]” (see also 2 *Apol.*

44. For a helpful discussion of Justin’s eschatology, see Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 157–68.

45. The appeal to reason also allows Justin to temper the determinism that seems to attend his theory that human sin results from demonic enslavement. See the discussions of free will in n. 41 above.

46. Skarsaune, “Judaism and Hellenism,” 596–97.

6, 8, 10). Responding in self-defense, “the demons themselves [αὐτοὶ οἱ δαίμονες], by means of men who rejoiced in iniquity, arranged to kill him as an atheist and impious man, by saying that he was introducing new divinities [λέγοντες καινὰ εἰσφέρειν αὐτὸν δαιμόνια].” Not surprisingly, this example occasions Justin’s plea on behalf of Christians and Christianity: “For not only were these things refuted by reason [ὑπὸ λόγου] among the Greeks, though Socrates, but also among the barbarians, by the Logos Himself [ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ λόγου], who took shape and became a human being and was called Jesus Christ.” As with Socrates, it was “by the Logos” that Christians came to discern the truth behind the appearance of pagan worship, recognizing that “those demons that did these things [τοὺς ταῦτα πράξαντας δαίμονας] are not only not genuine [i.e., not δαίμονες in the good sense] but are wicked and impious demons [κακοὺς καὶ ἀνοσίους δαίμονας].”

On the one hand, this line of argument allows Justin to contend that reason should enable his pagan audience to discern the terrible error in persecuting Christians and, conversely, that any decision against the Christians only exposes the Roman rulers as irrational demoniacs.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, his appeal to reason serves a powerful apologetic function; if Christ is the Logos, then Christianity must be the true philosophy. Hence, it is especially striking that Justin integrates Greco-Roman philosophical critiques of popular religion into his denunciation of pagan idolatry as demonic.<sup>48</sup> By enlisting pagan philosophy to critique pagan religion, Justin draws a stark distinction between the two realms. When examined in terms of the tension between Justin’s assertion of the affinities of Christian belief with pagan philosophy and his simultaneous depiction of pagan religion in absolute enmity with Christianity, the angelic descent myth thus emerges as one of two different strategies for explaining the similarities between Christians and pagans—both of which presuppose the priority of origins in determining subsequent historical development to the present day.

47. This resonates meaningfully with the beginning of *1 Apology* where Justin pleads with his pagan audience to live up to their reputation as “pious people and philosophers [εὐσεβεῖς καὶ φιλοσόφους],” not pandering to “superstitious people [δεισιδαίμωνων]” nor being “induced by irrational impulse [ἀλόγῳ ὁρμηῇ]” in making up their minds about the Christians (*1 Apol.* 2).

48. See, e.g., Hanson, “Christian Attitude,” 145–48; and Droge, *Homer or Moses*, 54–55.

## TWO STRATEGIES OF EXPLAINING SAMENESS

Just as the ramifications of Justin's aetiology of pagan wickedness can be illumined through contrast with his approach to the Jews, so his theory of the demonic inspiration of pagan culture must be considered in the context of this alternative approach to pagan culture: his famous explanation of how some seeds of truth came to reside in Greco-Roman philosophy. Not only is it significant that Justin develops two distinct strategies for explaining different types of similarities between Christianity and Greco-Roman culture, but the interrelation between them also exposes important points of intersection between his pursuit of apologetic purposes, which are ostensibly oriented to Romans in positions of political power, and his articulation of a soteriology and salvation history, which speak to his fellow Christians (as well as potential proselytes).

The two strategies share common rhetorical goals. On the one hand, Justin highlights the affinities between pagans and Christians in order to question why the latter are singled out for persecution. On the other hand, these commonalities lay the groundwork for his subsequent explanation of Christianity, fostering sympathy among non-Christian readers by suggesting that Christian doctrines are not as bizarre as they may have been misled to believe. In *1 Apology* 20, for instance, Justin enumerates a lengthy list of parallels between Christian beliefs and Hellenistic philosophy. The apologetic motivations for the comparison are exposed by the plaintive plea of his concluding question: "If, therefore, on some points we teach the same things as the poets and philosophers whom you honor . . . why are we unjustly hated more than all others?"

In the passages that follow we find similar lists of commonalities between Greco-Roman myths and Christian beliefs about Christ. Appealing for acceptance of Christian doctrines on the grounds of their resemblance to familiar Greco-Roman traditions, Justin asserts: "When we say also that the Logos, who is the firstborn of God, was produced without sexual union and that he, Jesus Christ our teacher, was crucified and died and that he rose again and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem as sons of Jupiter!" (*1 Apol.* 21). He goes on to argue that the Christian doctrine of Jesus' virgin birth should be tolerated "in common with what you accept of Perseus" (*1 Apol.* 22) and that Christians' testimony concerning his healing powers cannot be dismissed as incredible, inasmuch as their claims are "very similar to the deeds said to have been done by Asclepius" (*1 Apol.* 22). Indeed, why should pagans find peculiar the Christian belief of Christ as Logos when they themselves "say that Hermes is the angelic

[ἀγγελτικόν] Logos of God” (1 *Apol.* 22), “the interpreting [ἐρμηνευτικόν] Logos and teacher of all” (1 *Apol.* 21)?<sup>49</sup> To justify the essential plausibility of Jesus’ resurrection, Justin even cites precedents in pagan mythology for the dying and rising of gods and deified men, ranging from Bacchus to Hercules to the emperor himself (1 *Apol.* 21). Again, he appeals to common ground in order to protest the injustice of Christian persecution: “Although we say things similar to what the Greeks say, we are only hated on account of the name of Christ” (1 *Apol.* 24).

Justin may marshal these two strategies of explaining sameness towards identical apologetic ends, but they differ significantly in terms of valuation. In contrast to the pointed cultural critique inherent in his theory of demonic inspiration, his theory of the Logos celebrates the positive similarities between Christians and pagans. Justin argues that “whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Logos” (2 *Apol.* 10). This theory has a powerful rhetorical function, allowing Justin to claim continuity with all positive aspects of Greco-Roman culture because, “Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians” (2 *Apol.* 13). By providing a framework for articulating Christ’s activity in the world prior to the incarnation, this theory simultaneously helps him to buttress his claims for the singular truth of the Christian “philosophy” through appeal to its fundamental universality and ultimate (indeed pre-created) antiquity. Justin can thus go on to argue that “our doctrines are not shameful, according to a sober judgment, but are indeed more lofty than all human philosophy” (2 *Apol.* 15); the beliefs that seem to be new to his pagan audience are in fact the most ancient of all, and the doctrines that seem so unfamiliar are actually the best of everything that is already known to them.

Anticipating the obvious counterargument that Christianity is only as ancient as the life of Jesus, 1 *Apology* 46 asserts the existence of pre-Christian Christians. Since Christ is not only “the firstborn of God” but the Logos “of whom every race of humankind partook,” then everyone “who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought to have been atheists.” As examples he cites “among the Greeks: Socrates and Heraclitus” and “among the barbarians: Abraham and Ananias and Azarias and Misael and Elias.” If the Logos could forge Christians in the past, then how much more so now, after the incarnation, should reason

49. On the possible origins of this tradition in philosophical allegory, see Widdicombe, “Justin Martyr,” 237.

guide humans toward Christianity? In Justin's view any "intelligent man" should be able to discern that "through the power of the Logos, according to the will of God the Father and Lord of all, he was born of a virgin as a man and was named Jesus, and he was crucified and died and rose again and ascended into heaven."

What, then, distinguishes the pagan pursuit of reason from Christianity? Despite his enthusiastic comments in *1 Apology* 46, Justin posits an essential difference between rational humans who lived prior to the incarnation and present-day Christians: even the finest philosophers of the past had an inadequate grasp of true reason.<sup>50</sup> Even Socrates, the celebrated paradigm of the pre-Christian Christian, only partly knew the Logos (*2 Apol.* 10). Not only does Justin christianize the Greco-Roman concept of reason by defining rationality as the ability to reject idolatry and the willingness to suffer persecution for this belief,<sup>51</sup> but he argues that the deficiency of even the finest pagan philosophers can be discerned in the fissures of irrationality that mar their otherwise enlightened philosophies. In his words, "Since they did not know the whole of the Logos, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves" (*2 Apol.* 10). Consequently, the teachings of Plato are not wholly different from those of Christ, and yet:

50. R. M. Price, "Are there 'Holy Pagans' in Justin Martyr?" *SP* 31 (1997): 168–69, similarly shows how a careful reading of *1 Apology* 46 leads us to attenuate its seemingly universalistic thrust. Price notes that the selectivity in Justin's group of pre-Christian Christians corresponds more to the criterion of their persecution and martyrdom than to their beliefs or philosophies (although in Heraclitus' case, Justin is probably incorrect; see *1 Apol.* 5; *2 Apol.* 8.1–3). He concludes that "the reference to a universal participation in the Logos [i.e., in *1 Apol.* 46] may mislead. . . . Justin's concern is not with Greeks, or even philosophers, generally, but with those who could be represented as Christian fellow travelers and as fellow victims of demonic malice. . . . In all, the philosophers singled out for mention by Justin and Athenagoras as virtuous and especially close to the Logos belong to a special and limited class. They do not illustrate some general claim that virtuous pagans are virtual Christians. Rather, they are selected as victims of persecution by the wicked under demonic influence. . . . In this Christian rewriting of the history of Greek philosophy, the paganism of its finest figures is in effect denied" (169–70). The implications for our understanding of the *Apologies* are striking: "Justin's concern is simply to show that, from time immemorial, it is the enemies of the demons who have suffered persecution and that Christian martyrs deserve respect even from pagans as the successors of the most heroic of the philosophers. Even when he calls pagans 'Christians,' his concern is to raise the status of Christians among pagans, rather than to win for philosophers the respect of Christians" (170–71).

51. Skarsaune, "Judaism and Hellenism," 598.

they are not in all respects similar—as neither are those of the others, Stoics, and poets, and historians. For each man spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the spermatic Logos [τοῦ σπερματικῆς θείου λόγου] . . . but they who contradict themselves on the more important points appear not to have possessed the heavenly wisdom. . . . For all the writers could only see realities darkly through the sowing of the implanted Logos that was in them. (2 *Apol.* 13)

According to Justin, the Logos has been always and everywhere the source of human rationality, but no one living prior to the incarnation could totally access the truth. “Imitation according to capacity” allowed humans to view shimmering glints, but the salvific illumination of the whole truth awaited the possibility of “imitation according to grace.”<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, even the partial truths of philosophy stand in contrast to the demonic inspiration of pagan religion.<sup>53</sup> This is most poignantly demonstrated by his depiction of the persistent demonic resistance to the Logos and its rational adherents. In a precise inversion of the activity of the Logos in human history demons promulgate irrational beliefs and behavior. Not only are they responsible for the paradigmatically foolish activity of idolatry (esp. 1 *Apol.* 9) but even the bad laws of humans have supernatural origins. Even while Justin lauds the universality of the Logos as manifest in the fact that “people everywhere . . . have made laws and philosophized according to right reason, by their prescribing to do some things and refrain from others” (2 *Apol.* 6), he affirms a correspondingly negative development in human history: “We know that the wicked angels appointed laws conformable to their own wickedness, in which the men who are like them delight” (2 *Apol.* 9). At the same time, the demons take measures to counteract the activity of the Logos among humankind. For this, their main method is to inspire the persecution of Christians, which Justin thus depicts as part of a larger pattern in history; the demons have always provoked hostility towards anyone who seemed receptive to the Logos, whether they exhibited their rationality through true knowledge (e.g., 1 *Apol.* 44) or through pious deeds (e.g., 2 *Apol.* 8).

Whereas Justin sees Greek philosophy and Christianity as two points—however distant—along the same continuum, he argues that the common

52. Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 122–23; and Droge, *Homer or Moses*, 53. Notably, Justin presents *himself* as an exemplar of a philosophically minded pagan who turned from demonic deception to the whole Logos (2 *Apol.* 13).

53. In a sense, this becomes true by definition in Justin’s schema, since he proposes that one can recognize Logos-inspired philosophy precisely by its rejection of two demonic creations: myth and idolatry; see Skarsaune, “Judaism and Hellenism,” 594–603.

elements in Greco-Roman religions and Christianity paradoxically reflect their derivation from two opposing sources. Not only are their affinities illusory but their similarities conceal a malicious attempt to lead humankind astray. Exploiting the gap between appearance and reality, demons engage in deceptive mimesis of the divine.<sup>54</sup> “Through the instrumentality of the poets” these evil spirits circulated myths that prefigured the reality of the incarnation (*1 Apol.* 23) in order “to produce in men the idea that the things which were said with regard to Christ were mere marvelous tales, like the things which were said by the poets” (*1 Apol.* 54). The contrast with Justin’s explanation of philosophical parallels with Christianity is highlighted by a shared source, namely, the writings of Moses. Whereas Plato was dependent on Moses for his doctrine of creation (*1 Apol.* 69–70), the demons generate mythic mimics of Mosaic prophecies that they do not completely understand in order “to deceive and lead astray the human race” (*1 Apol.* 54–55).<sup>55</sup>

#### DRAMATIZING THE CHRISTIAN STRUGGLE AGAINST DEMONS, PAGANS, AND JEWS

For Justin, as we have seen, the present conditions of Jews and pagans each resonate with a particular historical breach in the intended harmony between God and his creatures. He sees the Jewish condition as marred by a long history of deliberate disobedience to God’s commandments; just as Eve “brought forth disobedience” by succumbing to the Serpent (*Dial.* 100), so Jews now turn away from God and towards the demons through their own free will. By contrast, the pagan condition is characterized by enslavement to the angels who fell before the flood. Together with their demonic sons, these evil spirits trick pagans into adopting false religion by worshiping idols and, even more perniciously, into rejecting true religion and persecuting Christians.

What, then, of the Christians themselves? Justin readily admits that Gentile Christians, like all other pagans, once served the demons (*Dial.* 30, 78, 83, 91). After their conversion to faith in Christ, however, they pray to God to be protected from these spirits by Christ, who wields unique power over the demons (*2 Apol.* 8; *Dial.* 30, 49, 121, 125, 131) as

54. Droge, *Homer or Moses*, 57.

55. Not only do demons themselves imitate the divine, but they promulgate sinfulness by encouraging human imitation of the false divinities to whom they ascribe impious deeds of bloodlust and sexual licentiousness; see *1 Apol.* 21, 25; *2 Apol.* 12, 14.

demonstrated by the special efficacy of exorcism in his name (*2 Apol.* 6; *Dial.* 76, 78, 85, 122). Moreover, Justin suggests that the birth of Jesus marked Christ's victory over Satan (*Dial.* 85.3). By loosening the power that demons wield over humankind, Christ facilitated the conversion of pagans like Justin from idolatry to monotheistic piety, thereby accounting for the proliferation of converts among "the nations."

Justin, however, cites the continued hostility of the Jews as evidence for the additional stumbling blocks on their path to salvation. In his eyes the Jewish rejection of Christ is simply the predictable culmination of a long history of their willful misunderstanding of God's plan, as exemplified both by their sinful deeds and by their misreading of scripture (e.g., *1 Apol.* 35.6, 38.7–8, 40.6; *Dial.* 16.4, 17.1, 32.3, 93.4, 103.2, 104.1, 133.6). Furthermore, he suggests that the Jews' alleged persecution of both Jesus and later Christians attests to their continued choice to ally themselves with the demonic (*Dial.* 17, 26, 96, 108, 131). Within Justin's schema Christ's incarnation may have marked a decisive turning point in the history of pagan wickedness and pagan links to demons, but the majority of the Jews will forever remain as they have always been, as distant from the true path to salvation as they are near to its signs and manifestations (*1 Apol.* 49; *Dial.* 28, 30, 137).<sup>56</sup>

Although Justin's demonology thus assumes and asserts a salvation history that is primarily oriented towards Gentiles, it simultaneously helps to focus our attention on the surprising parallels in his approaches to Judaism and Greco-Roman culture, thereby attenuating his negative views of Judaism no less than his positive views of Hellenism. Perhaps the most striking example concerns pagan philosophy, the very tradition that Justin holds up as the paradigmatic Logos-inspired (as opposed to demon-inspired) pagan discourse. As Skarsaune has shown, Justin assumes an important distinction in his depiction of non-Christian philosophers, past and present: "If Socrates, according to Justin, fought demons and criticized Homer, Justin must have been fully aware that this was no longer true of the Platonists of his time."<sup>57</sup> Inasmuch as Justin encourages his fellow Christians to see themselves as the true heirs of classical philosophers such as Socrates (*1 Apol.* 5; *2 Apol.* 6, 7, 10), he does so by means of a tacit yet pointed contrast with the non-Christian philosophers

56. This is perhaps most profoundly expressed by the fact that even Trypho—a Jew who has read the gospels (*Dial.* 10), who possesses some philosophical background, and who is curious enough about Christianity to hear Justin out—does not convert at the end of the *Dialogue*, even though the two leave each other on good terms. See further Rajak, "Talking at Trypho," 78.

57. Skarsaune, "Judaism and Hellenism," 596–97.

of their own time. Just as Justin's *Dialogue* orients Christians to see themselves in essential continuity with Israel's prophets of old but in radical discontinuity with present-day Jews, so his approach to pagan philosophy in the *Apologies* conceals a critique of the deteriorated present within its evocation of a glorious past. The result is a supercessionist model that strikingly parallels his appropriation of the label "Israel" away from the Jews and for the church.

At the same time that Justin adopts the critique of "the poets" from pagan philosophy (esp. 2 *Apol.* 10), he also subverts and inverts the most prevalent philosophical solution to the problem of the honorably ancient yet morally suspect myths, namely, allegorical interpretation.<sup>58</sup> It is plausible that Justin himself was familiar with some of the allegorical traditions current among philosophical circles at his time; if so, then it proves particularly significant, as Peter Widdicombe notes, that he "does not acknowledge the Greek tradition of self-criticism."<sup>59</sup> His *Apologies* nevertheless help Christians to counter these re-readings with their own. Answering allegory with typology, he reinterprets pagan myths in terms of Christ (e.g., 1 *Apol.* 21–22) and explains the gap between their apparent literal meaning and their underlying truths as the product of the demonic imitation of biblical prophecies for malicious aims.

This hermeneutical strategy finds parallels in his treatment of Judaism. Just as Justin's reversal of the Deuteronomistic principle offers an exegetical key for unlocking the Christian meaning in Jewish history and scripture, so his theories about the demonic mimesis of the divine provide a powerful explanation for the inadequacy of the literal meanings of pagan myths. And just as his *Dialogue* rehearses Christian arguments with Jews over biblical interpretation, so his *Apologies* may provide Christians with models for Christianized re-readings of Greco-Roman myths whereby these traditions too can be claimed as ancient proof texts for the messianism of Jesus and the truth of Christianity.

What is most striking, however, is the degree to which Justin's demonology functions to undermine the validity of both Judaism and Greco-Roman religion by defining these traditions in terms of their alleged hostility towards Christians and Christianity. As noted above, Justin's critique of Jewish faith and law is rooted in his allegations about this nation's propensity for demon worship; their alleged affinity for demons is said to explain God's reasons for giving them special laws and setting

58. Widdicombe, "Justin Martyr," 234–38; and Hanson, "Christian Attitude," 157–63.

59. Widdicombe, "Justin Martyr," 238.

them apart from other nations as well as their motivations for allegedly persecuting Jesus and his followers. Likewise, Justin's assertion of the demonic inspiration of pagan religion and culture serves to conflate the error of Greco-Roman polytheism with the injustice of the prosecution and persecution of Christians.<sup>60</sup> By blaming the demons for the false accusations against Christians (*1 Apol.* 23; *2 Apol.* 12–13) and for the irrationality that causes pagans to believe them (*1 Apol.* 10), the *Apolo-gies* encourage Christians to extrapolate their feelings of persecution into their daily experience living in a predominantly pagan environment. Although their unique alliance with rationality frees them from the deceptive influence of demons, Justin warns them that they still live in a world ruled by the proxies of the fallen angels and their sons—a world in which evil spirits lurk everywhere, hiding behind every statue and inside every temple, whispering lies into the ears of their pagan neighbors.

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60. On the political overtones of this association see Pagels, "Christian Apologists," 301.