

## Two notes on the «Jewishness» of the New Testament

### Hebrews

I am far from being a *Hebrews scholar*, very far indeed. My purpose in this brief paper is to offer a naive reading – perhaps too naive for some – of aspects of the text from the perspective of a rank and file outsider, a Hebrew scholar if not a scholar of Hebrews. I do not seek to supersede the interpretations of expert New Testament scholars but to supplement them by turning up the volume and more precisely focussing the midrashic nature of one crucial passage in the Epistle. My modest suggestion is that Hebrews is resounding in a much more «Jewish» soundscape than is usually predicated of it. On my first reading of Hebrews, my immediate and powerful impression was that this is midrash, midrash in style, midrashic even in the structure of its content. I wish here, in this brief communique, to put some flesh on the bones of that impression.

The homily on Psalms 95 in Hebrews 3–4 is midrash. Many New Testament scholars have recognized this. As a scholar of midrash, I hope here to cash out that insight a bit more richly than the New Testament critics have been able to.

I want first to focus on the midrashic function of the word «today» in this midrash. Let me begin by quoting the relevant verses from the epistle:

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, «Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as on the day of testing in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup> where your ancestors put me to the test, though they had seen my works <sup>10</sup> for forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and I said, “They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known my ways”. <sup>11</sup> As in my anger I swore, “They will not enter my rest”». <sup>12</sup> Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called «today», so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first

confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup> As it is said, «Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion». <sup>16</sup> Now who were they who heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? <sup>17</sup> But with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief (3:7-19).

Standard commentaries give fairly neutral interpretations to verse 13. So Bruce: «While this time lasts, each succeeding day is a fresh “Today” in which they may heed the psalmist’s warning to hear the voice of God» (Bruce, *ad loc*), hardly rendering much sense at all to «as long as it is called “today”». Attridge’s comment comes closer to the force of «today» for this midrash: «The comment continues to echo the words of the psalm, indicating that this exhortation should take place each day, that is, while the “today” of the scripture is spoken of as a present reality». Lane (*ad loc*) sharpens the point further, emphasizing the qualitative point of «today»: «The danger of apostasy and sin persists so long as the moment of demand and opportunity, which is called “Today”, is valid». Lane’s reading can be supported strongly via appeal to midrashic usage and a parallel. In good midrashic form, «as long as it is called “today”» is a shorthand for the verse as a whole. «Today» becomes a coded reference for obeying the word of God as a sort of synecdoche of the verse, yielding the following sense: But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called «today», (*i.e.*, a day in which you hear the voice of the Lord), so that none of you may be hardened (as at Kadesh) by the deceitfulness of sin, the sequel to the verse. A day in which the faithful are indeed faithful is the day known as «Today». Those Israelites who were unfaithful at Kadesh were not able to enter into the «rest», but those who will make it a «today when you hear my voice» will enter into my rest. In my view, this midrash-style reading of the verse renders it a much stronger and more vivid moment in the homily as a whole.

As it happens, there is a lovely parallel to this reading of the verse from a considerably later rabbinic text. In this remarkable text, according to the Babylonian Talmud it is the Messiah himself who has given this midrashic reading to «Today» as an allusion to the whole clause of the verse. Here is the text (in my own translation):

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi encountered Elijah the Prophet standing at the grave of Rabbi Shim’on ben Yohai. He asked him, «Will I enter the next world»? He said to him, «If this master [R. Shim’on] desires it». He said to

him, «The two [of us] I have seen; the voice of the third [R. Shim'on] I have not heard». [That is to say, I haven't received my answer].  
 He said to him [Elijah], «When will the Messiah come»? He replied to him, «Go ask him himself»!  
 «Where does he sit»?  
 «At the gate of Rome».  
 «And what is his sign [by which I will recognize him]»?  
 «He sits among the poor suffering from diseases and all of them loosen and tighten all their bandages at one time, and he, loosens one and tightens it [then another and another], saying “perhaps I will be required and this way I won't delay”».  
 He [Yehoshua] went to him [Messiah] and said to him, «Peace be with you my master and teacher».  
 He said to him, «Peace be with you. Son of Levi».  
 He said to him, «When will the master come»?  
*He said to him, «Today»!*  
 He [Yehoshua] came to Elijah, who asked him, «What did he say to you»?  
 He said to him, «Peace be with you, son of Levi».  
 He [Elijah] said, «I promise you that you and your father will come into the next world».  
 He [Yehoshua] said, «However he lied to me, for he said today I will come, and he has not come».  
 He said to him, «This is to what he referred, “Today if you will hear my voice”». (*Sanhedrin* 98a)

That is, on the day when the people will be obedient to God, on that day, known as «Today», the redemption will come. The use of the allusion to «today» is precisely the same in these otherwise quite different texts. The one word, «today» is used as an allusion to the verse, «Today if you will hear my voice», and in both cases in the messianic context. Without ascribing the slightest chance of influence in either direction vis-à-vis the particular, the strategy of use of the single word as synecdoche for the verse seems to strongly mark the connection of our author of Hebrews to midrashic styles of thinking about verses and thus also to help us to antedate those styles of thinking themselves to their attestation within rabbinic texts from the third century and later. «But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today”, so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin» is a midrashic paraphrase of that verse which being interpreted means: «exhort one another every day, “if [it is called]: *a today* in which you will listen to my voice”, lest any of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin [as in the rebellion]».

When we move on to the second part of this homily, we will see other midrashic patternings at work:

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us take care that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it. <sup>2</sup> For indeed the good news came to us just as to them; but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. <sup>3</sup> For we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, «As in my anger I swore, “They shall not enter my rest”», though his works were finished at the foundation of the world. <sup>4</sup> For in one place it speaks about the seventh day as follows, «And God rested on the seventh day from all his works». <sup>5</sup> And again in this place it says, «They shall not enter my rest». <sup>6</sup> Since therefore it remains open for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> again he sets a certain day – «today» – saying through David much later, in the words already quoted, «Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts». <sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later about another day. <sup>9</sup> So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; <sup>10</sup> for those who enter God’s rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs (4:1-11).

Although I might very well have missed it, it seems to me that lacking in the hermeneutical tradition is sufficient emphasis on the fact that Psalm 95 is itself a homily. The congregation listening to this psalm is being exhorted not to behave as their ancestors did in the desert at Kadesh lest the same fate befall them. Hebrews simply builds his homily on the logic of the one in Psalms, for that one clearly, as I’ve just said, refers to two times, an ancient one and a contemporary one. «Today if you hear my voice» refers to the time of the homilist of the Psalm, the Holy Spirit, speaking through David: He is our God and we are his flock, if today you will hear his voice. Since, as it were, that time, the time of the Psalm, is not defined historically, the homilist behind Hebrews reads it entirely legitimately as being for all time, continuing, as in the Talmud, the figura of «today» as not being itself temporal but tropological signifying obedience or faith. Before the homilist says anything further, it is clear that the rest referred to in the Psalm cannot be the rest in the Holy Land denied the faithless at Kadesh (for that had been taken care of long before David) but must signify some other rest, still open, still pending and thus still losable for the addressees of the Holy Spirit in the homily in the Psalm. So far we have just plain good close reading on the part of the Hebrews author. I thus somewhat disagree with Attridge here who explicates: «It remains for some to enter God’s “rest” and the previous recipients of the promise failed to do so because of disobedience (v. 6). God then set another date for the fulfillment, the “today” of the psalm (v. 7). This offer definitively proves that the promise was not realized by Joshua (v. 8) and it remains open for

those who currently hear the psalm to join in the festive sabbath rest that god enjoys (vv. 9-10)». In my humble view, this doesn't quite capture the subtleties of the hermeneutics here which emphasize that the psalmist himself, already a homilist, is drawing an analogy from the generation of the desert to the present generation of all time. As they failed to enter into the rest of their time, the Promised Land owing to their disobedience, you, on the other hand, may yet achieve the rest promised you, if it is «today», the forever day in which you hear my voice. Had the «rest» intended by the psalm meant the rest into which the next generation of Israelites did enter, namely the Promised Land, then there would remain no rest for the psalmist to be promising or threatening the denial of which. I emphasize again this is in some non trivial way the simple meaning of the psalm.

In other words, I am suggesting that it is not the nature of the rest that demonstrates that it still remains open, *pace* Attridge, but the psalm itself that does that: the rest must still be an open question. This, then, brings up the necessary question: What is this rest that the psalmist warns about and promises, since it is palpably not the rest achieved by Joshua? And now comes the midrashic moment, identified but, I think, slightly misapprehended so far. What the homilist wishes to do is to propose an anagogical meaning building on the tropological already exposed. The «rest» in question cannot be the physical rest of being in the Land as has been shown already and thus must signify something else.

The answer to this exegetical question is found through midrashic means. All the commentators I am consulting correctly identify the passage as midrash, but none of them get it quite right. This is neither the fairly arcane *gezera shava* nor the *rara avis* of resolving a contradiction between two verses by citing a third, nor surely the «midrash peshet», an *avis so rara* that no one has ever seen one in captivity or in the wild. What we have here is midrash, simplex, the interpretation of Bible by Bible, the reading of the Bible as one giant literary context.

An apparent oddity in the terminology provides the key to reading this as midrash:

<sup>4</sup> For *in one place it speaks* about the seventh day as follows, «And God rested on the seventh day from all his works». <sup>5</sup> And again in this place it says, «They shall not enter my rest» (4:4-5).

The term «in one place» [του] used here is passing strange. Attridge compares it, appropriately enough, to similar indefinite usages in Philo

and glosses it as «probably reflect[ing] a common homiletic practice, whereby the expositor does not dwell on what is commonly known or presupposed» (Attridge, 70). *Pace* Attridge, I would suggest that this is a reflection of a very common midrashic formula and far from suggesting that the matter is commonly known or presupposed, it indicates the major hermeneutical point to be made. Verses are frequently cited in the midrash as «places». The Hebrew term is *אחד במקום*, in one place, *i.e.* in one verse that will now be compared with another verse to make a point, the point that the midrashist wants to make about the verses and their meaning. Frequently, we find in early midrash the expression *הרבה במקומות* meaning in several verses.

Our Jewish Jesus-following midrashist wishes to explain what «my rest» could be, since it is clearly not the geophysical rest of entry into Palestine. The speaker of the Psalm is, as it were, God through the Holy Spirit. There is also nothing at all unusual in this when read from a Jewish perspective. Midrash constantly refers to a «he» who is the speaker of the Bible: «He says», «And he says», and «also *πάλιν* he says», precisely in the context of citations of verses in midrash. If God is claiming a «rest» that is his, where do we find that rest? It almost demands a reading as the Sabbath, the Sabbath that belongs to God, thus the heavenly Sabbath. In order to make that point, he simply cites a verse in which it is claimed that God has a Sabbath, a day of rest. That verse is Exodus 20:11, in which we read, «For six days, God made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and God rested on the seventh day; therefore God blessed the seventh day and made it holy». The use of *πάλιν* here is also garden-variety midrashic terminology for this simple kind of interpretation by of one passage by citation of another. It is into that rest that the psalmist, long after the desert days, encourages his congregation to enter and warns them of the consequences of behaving like that long ago desert generation of rebels. Do not make it another day of rebellion in which you will, once again, be denied entry into God's Sabbath, as they were denied entry into the land, but make sure it is a «Today, if you obey his voice» and thus a time of redemption.

The Rabbis also gave an eschatological reading to the rest in this verse and Sabbath altogether. As Attridge has mentioned and Lane also has emphasized, «over the course of time a distinctly eschatological concept of rest developed, presumably through synagogue preaching and school debate». Perhaps the most poignant of these school debates is the following from the Talmud [97a]:

Said Rav Katina: The world exists for six thousand years and then one thousand of desolation as it says, And on that day, God will be exalted alone [Isaiah 2]. Abbaye said, «two thousand years it will be desolate, for it says, “He will make us live after [two] days; on the third day, he will resurrect us, and we will live before him [Hosea 6]”». There is an early authority that supports the view of Rav Katina, «Just as the seventh year, makes the land fallow for one year in seven, thus the world lies fallow for one thousand in seven thousand years, for is said “And on that day, God will be exalted alone [Isaiah 2]”. And he says, A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day [Psalms 92], the day that is entirely Sabbath! And he says, For a thousand years in your eyes are as a yesterday, for it will pass [Psalms 90]».

Translated into Greek and with the typical trappings of debate edited out, that early tradition cited could almost be from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Note the catena-like citation of several verses, but this is not just a catena but an argument made through these citations. Thus, for the homily of Hebrews as well. I wouldn't dream, of course, of thinking of a rabbinic «background» to Hebrews nor even of so-called Jewish influence on the book. I would rather see it *as* a Jewish text, a homily presumably closely related to other Jewish homilies of the time, in style and to a great extent, yet to be determined and specified, in content as well – with a twist, of course, a fateful twist but not a whole new martini, as it were. This very preliminary study should be seen as a partial propaedeutic for a renewed study of the Jewish context of the christology of Hebrews. Perhaps we ought to be allowing into the theorized genealogy of Hebrews some deeper and wider connections with the hermeneutical resources from which Palestinian midrash developed as well. As such, Hebrews may provide very important and exciting evidence for the existence of midrashic forms earlier than any attestations in Palestinian Hebrew literature.

## **An Apocalypse among the Apocalypses: Revelation**

Revelation was part of an ongoing, complicated Jewish conversation during and after the first century A.D. I want to lay out some of the lines of that conversation here as I see them.

One thing I know is that Revelation is a Jewish text, which is not to deny, of course, that it is a Christian text, any more than it would be a contradiction to state that *1 Enoch* is a Jewish text and at the same time an Enochian text. These Jews are Christians; these Christians are Jews. It is impossible to say, as one occasionally hears from scholars, that a couple of the churches are having trouble with «Jews». The text does-

n't say that at all; it says they are having trouble with «those who say they are Jews and are not». The most plausible decoding of that is Pauline congregations. Paul is, after all, the only writer in the Christian canon, at any rate, who redefines the word «Jew» to refer to those who do not keep God's commandments. I think that David Frankfurter must be right on this (Frankfurter, 137).

Be that as it may, the book is a Jewish book from top to bottom and from beginning to end, and its author is clearly claiming by that statement itself – whoever the enemy is – that he and his readers are Jews. I find this an important controlling context for any reading of this book.

The second thing I know is that «intertextuality» is not a Sunday-go-to-meeting word for source texts. What I want to show here is that the reading strategies of the «Christian» apocalypse are consonant (although perhaps more developed) with the reading strategies of non-Christian Jewish apocalypses of about its time. Here is a manifestly «Christian» writer, that is a writer who focuses from beginning to end of his book on the figure of Jesus the Christ, but does not read Israel's Scriptures differently from other Jewish writers who do not believe in Jesus, as we shall see.

In the first century, let us remember, all Jews believe in Christ; not all Jews believe that Jesus was the Christ. The key figure that connects Revelation with other Jewish texts is not, of course, Jesus but the Son of Man. The connection is thus through the Book of Daniel, specifically through Daniel 7.

Without denying, of course, the living and vital presence of other prophetic texts within Revelation – indeed the book is a veritable echo chamber of such texts –, I think it is not an exaggeration to say that the Book of Daniel, especially Daniel 7, is the dominant structuring principle of the apocalypse. In some sense, the entire Revelation is a giant midrash on Daniel 7, and, as with midrash, it is the mobilization of other scriptures that produces its reading of that text. This is very similar, indeed, to the ways that other contemporaneous apocalyptic texts operate and function.

The intertexts, on my account, of Revelation are texts that we have no way of knowing whether or not John of Patmos ever read; they are certainly not his sources. I mean, for the moment at any rate, *The Similitudes of Enoch* and *IV Ezra*. They are intertexts, in large part, because Daniel is a *source* text for all of them. All of these Jewish authors, and there is nothing new in this statement, are reading Daniel 7 and discovering quite naturally there a story of two divine figures, one an-

cient of days and one «like a Son of Man», and even named «The Son of Man» in some texts. Let us, for example, look at how Daniel is used in the first of these:

There I saw one who had a head of days, and his head was like white wool. And with him was another, whose face was like the appearance of a man; and his face was full of graciousness like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel of peace, who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, about that son of man – who he was and whence he was (and) why he went with the Head of Days. And he answered me and said to me, «This is the son of man who has righteousness...».

It is necessary to pay close attention to the movement of this short but absolutely crucial text. The first two sentences are simply a gloss on Daniel 7:9, 10, 13:

As I watched,  
thrones were set in place,  
and an Ancient One took his throne;  
his clothing was white as snow,  
and the hair of his head like pure wool;  
his throne was fiery flames,  
and its wheels were burning fire.  
A stream of fire issued  
and flowed out from his presence.  
A thousand thousand served him,  
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.  
The court sat in judgement,  
and the books were opened.  
I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. As I watched in the night visions,  
I saw one like a human being  
coming with the clouds of heaven.  
And he came to the Ancient One  
and was presented before him (Daniel 7:9-13)».

In *Enoch* too, there are here two divine figures, one again who is ancient and one who has the appearance of a man, a «son of man», a young man according to my hypothesis. *Enoch* feels a necessity to understand this appearance. It is clear that he knows exactly who the «Head of Days», is but wonders who is *that* Son of Man. There is dra-

matic irony here. Although *Enoch* does not know the Son of Man, we, on the other hand, know precisely what son of man we are talking about, the one who comes, in Daniel, with the Ancient of Days of the snowy beard and two thrones as well. This passage is thus a virtual midrash on vv. 9-10 and vv. 13-14 of Daniel 7. Here is clearly where the talk in Revelation of the «One Like a Son of Man» as the ram and the Christ is to be located as well.

Moreover, the worship of Jesus Christ in the so-called early Church also finds an intertext in *Enoch*, for instance in *Enoch* 48:

<sup>2</sup> And in that hour that son of man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits,  
and his name, before the Head of Days.

<sup>3</sup> Even before the sun and the constellations were created,  
before the stars of heaven were made,  
his name was named before the Lord of Spirits.

<sup>4</sup> He will be a staff for the righteous,  
that they may lean on him and not fall;  
And he will be the light of the nations,  
and he will be a hope for those who grieve in their hearts.

<sup>5</sup> All who dwell on the earth will fall down and worship before him,  
and they will glorify and bless and sing hymns  
to the name of the Lord of Spirits.

Next to which we should read Rev 5:11-13:

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,

<sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, «Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing»!

<sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, !To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever»!

<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, «Amen»! and the elders fell down and worshiped.

The closest intertext to Revelation, however, is the apocalypse *IV Ezra*. Strong evidence that the identification of a divine figure based on Daniel 7 with the Messiah is not an aberration can be found in there. This text is, as we shall see, dependent as well on Daniel 7 and provides us with one more option for an interpretation of the Son of Man figure that is important for understanding the Gospels. In chapter 13 of that text, we meet the Danielic «One Like a Son of Man» once again.

There are aspects of this text, also roughly contemporaneous with the creation of the Gospels, that render its Son of Man even closer to the one of the Gospels and Revelation than even the Son of Man of *Enoch*:

After seven days I dreamed a dream in the night; <sup>2</sup> and behold a great wind arose from the sea so that it stirred up all its waves. <sup>3</sup> And I looked, and behold, this wind made something like the figure of a man come out of the heat of the sea. And I looked, and behold, that man flew with the clouds of heaven; and wherever he turned his face to look, everything under his gaze trembled, <sup>4</sup> and wherever the voice of his mouth issued forth, all who heard his voice melted as wax melts when it feels the fire.

<sup>5</sup> After this I looked, and behold, an innumerable multitude of men were gathered together from the four winds of heaven to make war against the man who came up out of the sea. <sup>6</sup> And I looked, and behold, he carved out for himself a great mountain, and flew upon it. <sup>7</sup> And I tried to see the region or place from which the mountain was carved, but I could not.

<sup>8</sup> After this I looked, and behold, all who had gathered together against him, to wage war with him, were much afraid, yet dared to fight. <sup>9</sup> And when he saw the onrush of the approaching multitude, he neither lifted his hand nor held a sword or any weapon of war; <sup>10</sup> but saw only how he sent forth from his mouth as it were a stream of fire, and from his lips a flaming breath, and from his tongue he shot forth a storm of fiery coals (*IV Ezra* 13:1-10).

Needless to say the enemies of the man are then burnt to a crisp if not worse than that. This passage, of course, is clearly based on a reading of Daniel 7 as are the *Enoch* passages discussed above. Even more sharply – partly owing to its relative density – than in *Enoch*, the *Ezra* passage makes absolutely clear the combination of the Son of Man, divine figure, and the Redeemer, or Messiah, a high Christology indeed, and, of course, one that is independent of the Jesus movement entirely. Closely paralleling the *Enoch* passage as well, here too, close reference is made to Daniel by citing the appearance of the figure as a man and only then referring to him as the man. Once again, we see a simile become a Redeemer. And since the simile clearly refers to a divine figure (a divine warrior), the Redeemer, the Man is held to be divine. As Michael Stone remarks, «It is quite interesting that the passages referring to breath or word are applied both to God and to the redeemer, but, other than our present passage, the passages in which fire is specifically mentioned all refer to God. Therefore, the present passage is unique in this respect and serves to emphasize the cosmic role of the human figure, which in any case many other elements of the text highlight». Pushing the point just a bit further, we arrive at the same sort of argument that has been advanced for the «One Like a Son of Man» of

Daniel, namely that if everywhere it is only YHWH who comes riding on clouds, then here too that figure is a divine one. *Ezra's Man* is divine as well.

The vision concludes:

<sup>12</sup> After this I saw the same man come down from the mountain and call to him another multitude which was peaceable. <sup>13a</sup> Then the forms of many people came to him, some of whom were joyful and some sorrowful; some of them were bound and some were bringing others as offerings (*IV Ezra* 13: 12-13).

This bit of the text nails down the claim that the Man, the Messiah, is God, for this eschatological vision with its offerings is drawn directly from Isaiah 66:20: «And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the Lord!» Those others brought here as offerings then are brought to the Lord, the kurios, the Son of Man, the Redeemer. Note that the same sort of argument that is used to prove the divinity of Jesus, namely the application of verses to him that are in the Bible predicated of YHWH works here as well for the Man from the Sea. This Man is the Lord. If Jesus is God, then, by the very same reasoning, so is this Man. And almost precisely the same mythological move is made in *IV Ezra* as in Revelation.

In 12:32 of that book, the «lion-man», that is the one who comes after the four beasts is identified as «this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David, and will come and speak to them; he will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings». Next to which we need to place Rev 22:16: «I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star».

If Adela Yarbro Collins is correct – and she surely is – in writing: «Like the *Similitudes of Enoch* and 4 *Ezra*, the Sayings Source constitutes an interpretation of Daniel 7 within the context of an expression of an original religious point of view» (Collins, 97), this is only more the case in the case of Revelation. It is this densely, deeply, intertextual web of allusion and imagery, the clear sense that these three first-century texts share the same world of citations, narrations, revisionings, and imagination that constitutes the intertextuality of Revelation.

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## Abstract

In questo articolo presento due particolari interpretazioni di testi del Nuovo Testamento nel tentativo di mostrare come essi siano profondamente implicati in strategie di lettura giudaiche. Nel primo credo di mostrare come un passaggio chiave della Lettera agli Ebrei si comprende bene come un midrash del Salmo 95. Questo midrash è molto vicino sia strutturalmente che tematicamente a molti midrashim rabbinici sullo stesso testo. Si dimostra così, tra le altre cose, che si tratta di forme antiche. Nella seconda parte mostro come l'Apocalisse è molto vicina alle coeve apocalissi giudaiche, che formano il suo intertesto, non la sua fonte! In nessun caso parlo di influenza giudaica sui cristiani o sul cristianesimo ma di appartenenti al movimento di Gesù che erano profondamente inseriti nel modo giudaico di interpretare le Scritture.