

And after this a king “strong of face” (עז פנים)⁵⁶ will arise for three months,⁵⁷ and then the wicked kingdom (i.e., Rome) will rule over Israel for nine months, as scripture says: “Therefore He will give them until the time the one laboring in childbirth has borne” (Mic 5:2). And there shall sprout up for them the Messiah of the lineage of Joseph, and he will bring them up to Jerusalem. He will rebuild the Temple and offer sacrifices;⁵⁸ fire shall descend from heaven and consume their sacrifices, as scripture promises: “and the violent ones among your people will arise” (Dan 11:14). If they are not worthy, the Messiah of the lineage of Ephraim comes; but if they are worthy, the Messiah of the lineage of David will come.⁵⁹

A wicked king will arise whose name is Armilos:⁶⁰ bald, with small eyes and a leprous forehead; his right ear closed up and his left ear open. If a good person should speak to him, he will turn his closed ear toward him, and if a wicked person should speak to him, he will turn his open ear to him.⁶¹ He is the offspring of Satan and a stone (statue),⁶² and he will come up to Jerusalem and incite war with the Messiah of the lineage of Ephraim at the eastern gate, as scripture states: “and they shall look to Me about the one whom they pierced” (Zech 12:10).⁶³ Israel will go into exile into the uncleared wilderness to forage among the salt-plants and broom-sage roots for forty-five days, and then they will be tested and refined, as scripture says: “I shall bring a third (of them) through the fire, etc.” (Zech 13:9). The Messiah of the lineage of Ephraim shall die there, and Israel shall mourn for

⁵⁶ See Deut 28:50; Dan 8:23; *Tg. Ket.* Qoh 8:1.

⁵⁷ Graetz identified this ruler as al-Saffāḥ (*Geschichte*, 5:411–12).

⁵⁸ This reputed activity is presumably dependent on the cultic tasks ascribed to this figure in *Sefer Zerubbabel*.

⁵⁹ This is apparently an application of the interpretation of Isa 60:22 (אחישנה בעתה) found in *b. Sanh.* 98a: זכו אחישנה לא זכו בעתה, “(if) they are worthy, ‘I will speed it (i.e., redemption) up’; (if) they are not worthy, ‘(it will unfold) at its predetermined pace.’”

⁶⁰ Hebrew ארמילאוס. As pointed out in the introduction, Armilos is the Jewish equivalent of the Christian Antichrist and the Muslim Dajjāl. This particular designation is first attested in both Jewish and Christian literature stemming from the first half of the seventh century CE. See Leopold Zunz and Hanokh Albeck, *Haderashot be-Yisrael* (2d ed.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 429–30 n. 31. Note also the remarks of Saadya, *Kitāb al-Amānāt wa’l-Itiqādāt von Sa’adja b. Jūsuf al-Fajjāmī* (ed. S. Landauer; Leiden: Brill, 1880), 239.4–6; 241.11–13; English translation, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (trans. Samuel Rosenblatt; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 301–2, 304.

⁶¹ Compare the end of *Midrash Wa-yosha’* (Jellinek, *BHM* 1:56): ואזנו הימנית סתומה ואחת פתוחה, וכשיבא אדם לדבר לו טובות מטה לו אזנו הפתוחה, “and his right ear will be closed up and the (other) one open. Whenever a person comes to tell him good things, he turns his closed up ear toward him, but if a person wants to speak wickedly, he turns his open ear toward him.”

⁶² This clause is Aramaic: והוא בריה דסטנא ודאבנא. I reject Bittenwieser’s suggested emendation; cf. his *Outline*, 34.

⁶³ See *b. Sukkah* 52a; Ibn Ezra *ad* Zech 12:10.

him. After this the Holy One blessed be He will reveal to them the Messiah of the lineage of David, but Israel will wish to stone him, and they will say to him: "You speak a lie, for the Messiah has already been slain, and there is no other Messiah destined to arise." They will scorn him, as scripture says: "despised and abandoned (by) men" (Isa 53:3). He shall withdraw and be hidden from them, as scripture continues: "like one hiding faces from us" (ibid.). But in Israel's great distress, they will turn and cry out from (their) hunger and thirst, and the Holy One, blessed be He, will be revealed to them in His glory, as scripture promises: "together all flesh will see" (Isa 40:5). And the King Messiah will sprout up there, as scripture says: "and behold with the clouds of heaven etc." (Dan 7:13), and it is written after it "and authority was given to him" (Dan 7:14). He shall blow (his breath) at that wicked Armilos and kill him, as scripture forecasts: "he will slay the wicked one with the breath of his lips" (Isa 11:4).

The Holy One, blessed be He, will signal for and gather together all Israel and bring them up to Jerusalem, as Scripture says: "Let me signal for them and I will gather them" (Zech 10:8). Fire will come down from heaven and consume Jerusalem up to three cubits, and uncircumcised foreigners and the impure will be removed from its midst. Then a rebuilt and decorated Jerusalem will descend from heaven; in it seventy-two precious stones will shine from one end of the world to the other. And all the nations will come to (bask in) her splendor, as scripture affirms: "and the nations will come to your light" (Isa 60:3). A rebuilt Temple will descend from the heavens—the one which was folded within Zebul,⁶⁴ for thus Moses perceived under prophetic inspiration, as scripture says: "You will bring it and You will plant it" (Exod 15:17).⁶⁵

Israel will dwell in peace for two thousand years.⁶⁶ They will feast upon Behemoth, Leviathan, and Ziz.⁶⁷ They will slaughter Behemoth; Ziz shall rend Leviathan with its ankles; and Moses will come and slaughter the "wild Ziz" (Ps 50:11; 80:14). At the end of two thousand years, the Holy One, blessed be He, will sit upon a throne of judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat.⁶⁸ Immediately the heavens and the earth will wear out and fade away: the sun will be ashamed and the moon embarrassed;⁶⁹ the mountains

⁶⁴ See *b. Hag.* 12b.

⁶⁵ Both a new Jerusalem and a new Temple descend from the heavens, a fusion of what were originally two separate motifs. See Avraham Grossman, "Jerusalem in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," in Praver and Ben-Shammai, *History of Jerusalem*, 302–4.

⁶⁶ "Our apocalyptic writer accepted the old aggadic scheme [see *b. Abod. Zar.* 9b and Rashi *ad loc.*—Reeves] wherein the world would exist for only six thousand years, of which the last two thousand would constitute the days of the Messiah" (quoted from Baron, *History*, 5:148).

⁶⁷ For the Ziz, a fabulous bird, see *b. B. Bat.* 73b.

⁶⁸ Cf. Joel 4:2, 12. Note also the corresponding passage in *Midrash Wa-yosha'*.

⁶⁹ Cf. Isa 24:23.