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Two Powers in Heaven? The Emergence of Binitarian Ideas in Pre-Christian Judaism

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Daniel 7:9-14

(7:9) I beheld till thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His garment was like white snow, and the hair of his head was like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were blazing fire.

(7:10) A river of fire streamed forth from before him; thousands upon thousands served him, and myriads upon myriads stood attending him. The court sat down and the books were opened. [...]

(7:13) As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like the Son of a Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

(14) And to him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

Proverbs 8:29-30

(29) When he [God] marked out the foundations of the earth,

(30) then I [Wisdom] was beside him as an *amon*,
a source of delight (*sha 'ashu 'im*) every day,
playing (*mesaheqet*) in front of him all the time.

Jesus Sirach 24:8

Then the Fashioner of all gave me his command,
and he who made me chose the spot for my tent,
Saying, "In Jacob make your dwelling,
in Israel your inheritance."

Jesus Sirach 24:23

All this (*tauta panta*) is true of the book of the Most High's covenant (*biblos diathēkēs*),
the law (*nomos*) which Moses enjoined on us
as a heritage for the community of Jacob.

Self Glorification Hymn (Eshel, *RdQ* 17/65-68, 1996, pp. 184f.)

(6) [] shall not be like my glory (*kevodi*), and none shall be exalted save me, nor shall come against me. For I have taken my seat in a/the [throne] in the heavens (*ki ani yashavti be[] beshamayyim*) ...

(7) [] I shall be reckoned with the gods (*ani 'im elim ethashev*), and my dwelling place is in the holy congregation (*u-mekhoni be-'adat qodesh*). ...

(8) ... Who has been despised on my account? And who can be compared with me in my glory (*u-mi bi-khvodi yiddameh li*)? Who [

(9) [] who be[ars all] griefs as I do? And who [suff]ers evil like me? [] and (any) teaching (*horayah*) will not be equal to [my teaching]. ...

(11) [] For I shall be reckoned with the gods (*elim*), and my glory (*kevodi*) with [that of] the King's sons (*bene ha-melekh*).

Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 48:2-6)

(2) At that hour, that Son of Man was given a name, in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, the Before-Time.

(3) Even before the creation of the sun and the moon,
before the creation of the stars,
he was given a name in the presence of the Lord of Spirits.

(4) He will become a staff for the righteous ones
in order that they may lean on him and not fall.

He is the light of the gentiles and he will become the hope of those who are sick in their hearts.

(5) All those who dwell upon the earth shall fall and worship before him;
they shall glorify, bless, and sing the name of the Lord of the Spirits.

(6) For this purpose he became the Chosen One;
he was concealed in the presence of (the Lord of the Spirits)
prior to the creation of the world, and for eternity.

1 Enoch 71:14-15

(14) And that angel [Michael] came to me,
greeted me with his voice and said to me:
“You are the Son of Man who is born for righteousness;
and righteousness abides upon you,
and the righteousness of the Chief of Days forsakes you not.”

(15) And then he [Michael] said to me:
“He proclaims to you peace in the name of the world to come;
for from hence has proceeded peace since the creation of the world,
and so shall it be to you for ever and for ever and ever.”

Prayer of Joseph (Jonathan Z. Smith, “Prayer of Joseph,” in: *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1985, p. 713)

I, Jacob, who is speaking to you, am also Israel, an angel of God and a ruling spirit (*pneuma archikon*).

Abraham and Isaac were created before any work. But I, Jacob – who men call Jacob but whose name is Israel – am he who God called Israel which means, a man seeing God, because I am the firstborn (*prōtogenos*) of every living thing to whom God gives life.

Paul, Letter to the Colossians 1:15-17

(15) He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn (*prōtotokos*) of all creation.

(16) For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,
things visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers –
all things have been created through him and for him.

(17) He himself is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.

Philo, De opificio mundi, 24

If you would wish to use a formulation that has been stripped down to essentials, you might say that the intelligible kosmos (*ton noēton kosmon*) is nothing else than the Logos of God (*theou logon*) as he is actually engaged in making the cosmos.

Philo, De confusione linguarum, 147

“We are all sons of one man” (Gen. 42:11): For if we have not yet become fit to be thought sons of God yet we may be sons of his invisible image, the most holy Word. For the Word is the eldest-born image of God (*theou gar eikōn logos ho presbytatos*).

John 1:1-4

- (1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- (2) He was in the beginning with God.
- (3) All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (4) in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.