

scroll in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people; as he opened it, all the people stood up. Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," with hands upraised. Then they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the Lord with their faces to the ground. Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites explained the Teaching to the People, while the people stood in their places. They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving the sense; so they understood the reading.

Nehemiah the Tirshatha, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were explaining to the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God: you must not mourn or weep," for all the people were weeping as they listened to the words of the Teaching. He further said to them, "Go, eat choice foods and drink sweet drinks and send portions to whoever has nothing prepared, for the day is holy to our Lord. Do not be sad, for your rejoicing in the Lord is the source of your strength." The Levites were quieting the people, saying, "Hush, for the day is holy; do not be sad." Then all the people went to eat and drink and send portions and make great merriment, for they understood the things they were told.

On the second day, the heads of the clans of all the people and the priests and Levites gathered to Ezra the scribe to study the words of the Teaching. They found written in the Teaching that the Lord had commanded Moses that the Israelites must dwell in booths during the festival of the seventh month, and that they must announce and proclaim throughout all their towns and Jerusalem as follows: "Go out to the mountains and bring leafy branches of olive trees, pine trees, myrtles, palms and [other] leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves booths on their roofs, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the House of God, in the square of the Water Gate and in the square of the Ephraim Gate. The whole community that returned from the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths—the Israelites had not done so from the days of Joshua son of Nun to that day—and there was very great rejoicing. He read from the scroll of the Teaching of God each day, from the first to the last day. They celebrated the festival seven days, and there was a solemn gathering on the eighth, as prescribed.

Source: Nehemiah 8, from *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*.

POST-EXILIC WRITINGS

GREEK RULE AND THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

Although the final events reported in the Tanakh take place around 430 B.C.E., the religious drama of the Jewish people continues in post-exilic writings, considered scriptural in many Jewish circles at the time. The extreme Hellenizing policies of the Selucid king Antiochus Epiphanes created a crisis for traditional Jews, further

intensified by the advocacy of these policies by Jewish High Priests themselves. Loyal Jewish writers sought a divine explanation for this crisis, which threatened the Jews' very existence. They wrote apocalyptic texts reporting visionlike revelations about a messianic deliverer and a cataclysmic end to the empires of their oppressors, topped by final divine judgment. The Book of Daniel in the Tanakh is thought to be an apocalyptic work from this period. The following is from the First Book of Enoch, one of the best-known apocalyptic texts of the Pseudepigrapha. The work, written by several authors between 200 B.C.E. and 100 C.E., reflects traditional apocalyptic themes.

46. *The Son of Man*. There I saw one who was the Ancient of Days, and His head was white like wool. With Him was another being who had the appearance of a man; and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, from where he was, and why he went with the Ancient of Days. He answered and said to me: "This is the Son of Man who has righteousness, with whom dwells righteousness, and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden because the Lord of Spirits has chosen him, and whose lot has the preeminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness forever. This Son of Man whom you have seen will raise up the kings and the mighty from their seats, and the strong from their thrones. He will loosen the reins of the strong, and break the teeth of the sinners. He will put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms because they do not extol and praise Him, nor humbly acknowledge from what source the kingdom was bestowed upon them. He will put down the countenance of the strong, and will fill them with shame. Darkness will be their dwelling, and worms will be their bed. They will have no hope of rising from their beds, because they do not extol the name of the Lord of Spirits, raise their hands against the Most High, and tread upon the earth and dwell upon it. All their deeds manifest unrighteousness and their power rests upon their riches. Their faith is in the gods that they have made with their hands. They deny the name of the Lord of Spirits, and they persecute the houses of His congregations and the faithful who hang upon the name of the Lord of Spirits." . . .
48. In that place I saw the fountain of righteousness which was inexhaustible. Around it were many fountains of wisdom: all the thirsty drank of them and were filled with wisdom. Their dwellings were with the righteous and holy and elect. At that hour that Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, and his name before the Ancient of Days. Even before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heavens were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He will be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves and not fall. He will be the light of the Gentiles, and the hope of those who are troubled of heart. All who dwell on earth will fall down and worship before him, and will praise and bless and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits. For this reason he has been chosen and hidden before Him, before the creation of the world and for evermore. And the

wisdom of the Lord of Spirits has revealed him to the holy and righteous. For he has preserved the lot of the righteous, because they have hated and despised this world of unrighteousness, and have hated all its works and ways in the name of the Lord of Spirits. For in his name they are saved, and according to his good pleasure it has been in regard to their life. In these days will the kings of the earth become shamed because of the works of their hands—the strong who possess the land. For on the day of their anguish and affliction they will not be able to save themselves. I will give them over into the hands of My elect. As straw in the fire, so will they burn before the face of the holy. As lead in the water, so will they sink before the face of the righteous, and no trace of them will any more be found. On the day of their affliction there will be rest on the earth, and before them they will fall and not rise again. There will be no one to take them with his hands and raise them. For they have denied the Lord of Spirits and His Messiah. The name of the Lord of Spirits be blessed. . . .

51. *Resurrection of the Dead.* In those days the earth will also give back that which has been entrusted to it. Sheol also will give back that which it has received, and hell will give back that which it owes. In those days the Elect One will arise, and he will choose the righteous and holy from among them [i.e., the risen dead]. The day has drawn near that they should be saved. The Elect One will in those days sit on My throne, and his mouth will pour forth all the secrets of wisdom and counsel. For the Lord of Spirits has given them to him and has glorified him. In those days the mountains will leap like rams, the hills will also skip like lambs satisfied with milk, and the faces of all the angels in heaven will be lighted up with joy. The earth will rejoice, the righteous will dwell upon it, and the elect will walk thereon. . . .
54. *Judgment.* I looked and turned to another part of the earth, and saw there a deep valley with burning fire. They brought the kings and the mighty, and began to throw them into this deep valley. There my eyes saw how they made instruments, iron chains of immeasurable weight. I asked the angel of peace who went with me, saying: "For whom are these chains being prepared?" He said to me: "These are being prepared for the hosts of [the demon] Azazel, so that they may take them and throw them into the abyss of complete condemnation, and they will cover their jaws with rough stones as the Lord of Spirits commanded. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Phanuel will take hold of them on that great day, and throw them on that day into the burning furnace. The Lord of Spirits may then take vengeance on them for their unrighteousness in becoming subject to Satan and leading astray those who dwell on the earth." In those days will punishment come from the Lord of Spirits. He will open all the chambers of water that are above the heavens, and of the fountains which are beneath the earth. All the waters will be joined with the waters: that which is above the heavens is the masculine, and the water that is beneath the

earth is the feminine. They will destroy all who dwell on the earth and those who dwell under the ends of the heaven. When they have recognized their unrighteousness which they have created on the earth, then by these they will die.

Source: First Enoch, 46, 48, 51, 54, adapted from R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

MACCABEAN REVOLT

The Book of Maccabees chronicles the clash between Hellenistic and Jewish culture, culminating in the Maccabean revolt and rise to power. The Book of Maccabees, written about 100 B.C.E. and included in the Septuagint, is the primary source of information for this period of Jewish history. The following describes the Hellenizing policies of Antiochus Epiphanes and the initial revolt launched by Mattathias.

1. After Alexander the Macedonian, Philip's son, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated Darius, king of the Persians and Medes, he became king in his place, having first ruled in Greece. He fought many campaigns, captured fortresses, and put kings to death. He advanced to the ends of the earth, gathering plunder from many nations; the earth fell silent before him, and his heart became proud and arrogant. He collected a very strong army and conquered provinces, nations, and rulers, and they became his tributaries. But after all this he took to his bed, realizing that he was going to die. He therefore summoned his officers, the nobles, who had been brought up with him from his youth, to divide his kingdom among them while he was still alive. Alexander had reigned twelve years when he died.

So his officers took over his kingdom, each in his own territory, and after his death they all put on royal crowns, and so did their sons after them for many years, causing much distress over the earth.

There sprang from these a sinful offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus, once a hostage at Rome. He became king in the year one hundred and thirty-seven of the kingdom of the Greeks.

In those days there appeared in Israel men who were breakers of the law, and they seduced many people, saying: "Let us go and make an alliance with the Gentiles all around us; since we separated from them, many evils have come upon us." The proposal was agreeable; some from among the people promptly went to the king, and he authorized them to introduce the way of living of the Gentiles. Thereupon they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the Gentile custom. They covered over the mark of their circumcision and abandoned the holy covenant; they allied themselves with the Gentiles and sold themselves to wrongdoing.

When his kingdom seemed secure, Antiochus proposed to become king of Egypt, so as to rule over both kingdoms. He invaded

Egypt with a strong force, with chariots and elephants, and with a large fleet, to make war on Ptolemy, king of Egypt. Ptolemy was frightened at his presence and fled, leaving many casualties. The fortified cities in the land of Egypt were captured, and Antiochus plundered the land of Egypt.

After Antiochus had defeated Egypt in the year one hundred and forty-three, he returned and went up to Israel and to Jerusalem with a strong force. He insolently invaded the sanctuary and took away the golden altar, the lampstand for the light with all its fixtures, the offering table, the cups and the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the golden ornament on the facade of the temple. He stripped off everything, and took away the gold and silver and the precious vessels; he also took all the hidden treasures he could find. Taking all this, he went back to his own country, after he had spoken with great arrogance and shed much blood. . . .

Two years later, the king sent the Mysian commander to the cities of Judah, and he came to Jerusalem with a strong force. He spoke to them deceitfully in peaceful terms, and won their trust. Then he attacked the city suddenly, in a great onslaught, and destroyed many of the people in Israel. He plundered the city and set fire to it, demolished its houses and its surrounding walls, took captive the women and children, and seized the cattle. Then they built up the City of David with a high, massive wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. There they installed a sinful race, perverse men, who fortified themselves inside it, storing up weapons and provisions, and depositing there the plunder they had collected from Jerusalem. And they became a great threat. . . .

Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, each abandoning his particular customs. All the Gentiles conformed to the command of the king, and many Israelites were in favor of his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath.

The king sent messengers with letters to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, ordering them to follow customs foreign to their land: to prohibit holocausts, sacrifices, and libations in the sanctuary, to profane the sabbaths and feast days, to desecrate the sanctuary and the sacred ministers, to build pagan altars and temples and shrines, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, to leave their sons uncircumcised, and to let themselves be defiled with every kind of impurity and abomination, so that they might forget the law and change all their observances. Whoever refused to act according to the command of the king should be put to death.

Such were the orders he published throughout his kingdom. He appointed inspectors over all the people, and he ordered the cities of Judah to offer sacrifices, each city in turn. Many of the people, those who abandoned the law, joined them and committed evil in the land. Israel was driven into hiding, wherever places of refuge could be found.

On the fifteenth day of the month Chislel, in the year one hundred and forty-five, the king erected the horrible abomination upon the altar of holocausts, and in the surrounding cities of Judah they built pagan altars. They also burnt incense at the doors of houses and in the streets. Any scrolls of the law which they found they tore up and burnt. Whoever was found with a scroll of the covenant, and whoever observed the law, was condemned to death by royal decree. So they used their power against Israel, against those who were caught, each month, in the cities. On the twenty-fifth day of each month they sacrificed on the altar erected over the altar of holocausts. Women who had had their children circumcised were put to death, in keeping with the decree, with the babies hung from their necks; their families also and those who had circumcised them were killed. But many in Israel were determined and resolved in their hearts not to eat anything unclean; they preferred to die rather than to be defiled with unclean food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. Terrible affliction was upon Israel.

2. In those days Mattathias, son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Joarib, left Jerusalem and settled in Modein. He had five sons: John, who was called Gaddi; Simon, who was called Thassi; Judas, who was called Maccabeus; Eleazar, who was called Avaran; and Jonathan, who was called Apphus. When he saw the sacrileges that were being committed in Judah and in Jerusalem, he said: "Woe is me! Why was I born to see the ruin of my people and the ruin of the holy city, and to sit idle while it is given into the hands of enemies, and the sanctuary into the hands of strangers? . . ."

Then Mattathias and his sons tore their garments, put on sackcloth, and mourned bitterly.

The officers of the king in charge of enforcing the apostasy came to the city of Modein to organize the sacrifices. Many of Israel joined them, but Mattathias and his sons gathered in a group apart. Then the officers of the king addressed Mattathias: "You are a leader, an honorable and great man in this city, supported by sons and kinsmen. Come now, be the first to obey the king's command, as all the Gentiles and the men of Judah and those who are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons shall be numbered among the King's Friends, and shall be enriched with silver and gold and many gifts." But Mattathias answered in a loud voice: "Although all the Gentiles in the king's realm obey him, so that each forsakes the religion of his fathers and consents to the king's orders, yet I and my sons and my kinsmen will keep to the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the commandments. We will not obey the words of the king nor depart from our religion in the slightest degree."

As he finished saying these words, a certain Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein according to the king's order. When Mattathias saw him, he was filled with zeal; his heart was moved and his just fury was aroused; he sprang forward

and killed him upon the altar. At the same time, he also killed the messenger of the king who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. Thus he showed his zeal for the law, just as Phinehas did with Zimri, son of Salu.

Then Mattathias went through the city shouting, "Let everyone who is zealous for the law and who stands by the covenant follow after me!" Thereupon he fled to the mountains with his sons, leaving behind in the city all their possessions.

Source: First Maccabees 1:1-24, 25-36, 41-64; 2:1-7, 12-28, from *The New American Bible* (Washington, DC: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1970). Reprinted by permission.

QUMRAN COMMUNITY RULE

Isolating itself from despotic foreign rulers and politically driven religious leaders, the desert community of Qumran believed it was preparing for a final battle between good and evil. The following, from the Qumran's Community Rule, describes our dual human nature as consisting of a spirit of truth and a spirit of error—the sources of proper and improper conduct, respectively. Reminiscent of Zoroastrianism, it records that God has "established the two spirits in equal measure until the last period." Followers of truth, the Sons of Light, will ultimately wage a victorious war over followers of error, the Sons of Darkness.

The Master shall instruct all the sons of light and shall teach them the nature of all the children of men according to the kind of spirit which they possess, the signs identifying their works during their lifetime, their visitation for chastisement, and the time of their reward.

From the God of knowledge comes all that is and shall be. Before ever they existed He established their whole design, and when, as ordained for them, they come into being, it is in accord with His glorious design that they accomplish their task without change. The laws of all things are in His hand and He provides them with all their needs.

He has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.

The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray, and until his end, all their sin, iniquities, wickedness, and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God. Every one of their chastisements, and every one of the seasons of their distress, shall be brought about by the rule of his persecution; for all his allotted spirits seek the overthrow of the sons of light.

But the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth will succor all the sons of light. For it is He who created the spirits of Light and Darkness and

founded every action upon them and established every deed [upon] their [ways]. And He loves the one everlastingly and delights in its works for ever; but the counsel of the other He loathes and for ever hates its ways.

These are their ways in the world for the enlightenment of the heart of man, and that all the paths of true righteousness may be made straight before him, and that the fear of the laws of God may be instilled in his heart: a spirit of humility, patience, abundant charity, unending goodness, understanding, and intelligence; (a spirit of) mighty wisdom which trusts in all the deeds of God and leans on His great loving kindness; a spirit of discernment in every purpose, of zeal for just laws, of holy intent with steadfastness of heart, of great charity towards all the sons of truth, of admirable purity which detests all unclean idols, of humble conduct sprung from an understanding of all things, and of faithful concealment of the mysteries of truth. These are the counsels of the spirit to the sons of truth in this world.

And as for the visitation of all who walk in this spirit, it shall be healing, great peace in a long life, and fruitfulness, together with every everlasting blessing and eternal joy in life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light.

But the ways of the spirit of falsehood are these: greed, and slackness in the search for righteousness, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and abundant evil, ill-temper and much folly and brazen insolence, abominable deeds (committed) in a spirit of lust, and ways of lewdness in the service of uncleanness, a blaspheming tongue, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart, so that man walks in all the ways of darkness and guile.

And the visitation of all who walk in the spirit shall be a multitude of plagues by the hand of all the destroying angels, everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath of the fury of God, eternal torment and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions. The times of all their generations shall be spent in sorrowful mourning and in bitter misery and in calamities of darkness until they are destroyed without remnant or survivor.

The nature of all the children of men is ruled by these (two spirits), and during their life all the hosts of men have a portion of their divisions and walk in (both) their ways. And the whole reward for their deeds shall be, for everlasting ages, according to whether each man's portion in their two divisions is great or small. For God has established the spirits in equal measure until the final age, and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions. Truth abhors the works of falsehood, and falsehood hates all the ways of truth. And their struggle is fierce in all their arguments for they do not walk together.

But in the mysteries of His understanding, and in His glorious wisdom, God has ordained an end for falsehood, and at the time of the visitation he will destroy it for ever. Then truth, which has wallowed in the ways of wickedness during the dominion of falsehood until the appointed time of judgment, shall arise in the world for ever. God will then purify

every deed of man with his truth; He will refine for Himself the human frame by rooting out all spirit of falsehood from the bounds of his flesh. He will cleanse him of all wicked deeds with the spirit of holiness; like purifying waters He will shed upon him the spirit of truth (to cleanse him) of all abomination and falsehood. And he shall be plunged into the spirit of purification that he may instruct the upright in the knowledge of the Most High and teach the wisdom of the sons of heaven to the perfect of way. For God has chosen them for an everlasting Covenant and all the glory of Adam shall be theirs. There shall be no more lies and all the works of falsehood shall be put to shame.

Until now the spirits of truth and falsehood struggle in the hearts of men and they walk in both wisdom and folly. According to his portion of truth so does a man hate falsehood, and according to his inheritance in the realm of falsehood so is he wicked and so hates truth. For God has established the two spirits in equal measure until the determined end, and until the Renewal, and He knows the reward of their deeds from all eternity. He has allotted them to the children of men that they may know good [and evil, and] that the destiny of all the living may be according to the spirit within [them at the time] of the visitation.

Source: "The Community Rule," Cave 1 Copy, Column 3:13-4:26, from *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 3d ed., tr. G. Vermes (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 64-67. Reprinted by permission.

RABBINIC WRITINGS

WISDOM OF THE FATHERS

The best-known section of the Mishnah is Abot (literally, fathers), also called Wisdom of the Fathers. This section was considered so important that medieval copies of the Talmud have Abot as the conclusion of each of its six key divisions. The typical style of the Mishnah is a give-and-take legal debate between the Tannaim. Abot is different in that it is a collection of proverbs by the Tannaim that are not debated. The first two divisions of Abot, presented here, begin by listing the transmitters of the oral law from Moses to the Tannaim themselves.

1. Moses received the Torah at Sinai. He conveyed it to Joshua; Joshua to the elders; the elders to the prophets; and the prophets transmitted it to the men of the Great Assembly. The latter emphasized three principles: Be deliberate in judgment; raise up many disciples; and make a fence to safeguard the Torah.
2. Simeon the Just was of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say: The world rests on three foundations: the Torah; the divine service; and the practices of loving kindness between man and man.
3. Antigonus of Soho received the tradition from him. He was accused to say: Be not like servants who serve their master because of

the expected reward, but be like those who serve a master without expecting a reward; and let the fear of God be upon you.

4. Yose ben Yoezer of Zeredah and Yose ben Yohanan of Jerusalem received the tradition from them. Yose ben Yoezer of Zeredah said: Let your house be a gathering place for wise men; sit attentively at their feet, and drink of their words of wisdom with eagerness.
5. Yose ben Yohanan of Jerusalem said: Let your home be a place of hospitality to strangers; and make the poor welcome in your household; and do not indulge in gossip with women. This applies even with one's own wife, and surely so with another man's wife. The sages generalized from this: He who engages in profuse gossiping with women causes evil for himself and neglects the study of the Torah, and he will bring upon himself retributions in the hereafter.
6. Joshua ben Perahya and Nittai the Arbelite received the tradition from them. Joshua ben Perahya said: Get yourself a teacher; and acquire for yourself a companion; and judge all people favorably.
7. Nittai the Arbelite said: Avoid an evil neighbor; do not associate with the wicked; and do not surrender your faith in divine retribution.
8. Judah ben Tabbari and Simeon ben Shatah received the traditions from them. Judah ben Tabbari said: Let not the judge play the part of the counselor; when they leave after submitting to the court's decree, regard them both as guiltless.
9. Simeon ben Shatah said: Search the witnesses thoroughly and be cautious with your own words lest you give them an opening to false testimony.
10. Shemaya and Abtalyon received the traditions from them. Shemaya said: love work; hate domineering over others; and do not seek the intimacy of public officials.
11. Abtalyon said: Sages, be precise in your teachings. You may suffer exile to a place where heresy is rampant, and your inexact language may lead your disciples astray, and they will lose their faith, thus leading to a desecration of the divine name.
12. Hillel and Shammai received the tradition from them. Hillel said: Be of the disciples of Aaron. Love peace and pursue peace; love your fellow creatures and bring them near to the Torah.
13. He also said: He who strives to exalt his name will in the end destroy his name; he who does not increase his knowledge decreases it; he who does not study has undermined his right to life; and he who makes unworthy use of the crown of the Torah will perish.
14. He also said: If I am not for myself who will be? But if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?
15. Shammai said: Set a fixed time for the study of the Torah; say little and do much; and greet every person with a cheerful countenance.
16. Rabban Gamaliel said: Provide yourself with a teacher, and extricate yourself from doubt; and do not habitually contribute your tithes by rough estimates.

17. Simeon his son said: All my life I was raised among scholars and I found that no virtue becomes a man more than silence; what is more essential is not study but practice; and in the wake of many words is sin.
18. Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said: The world rests on three foundations: truth, justice, and peace. As it is written (Zech 8:16): "You shall administer truth, justice and peace within your gates."

Source: *Mishnah, Abot*, ch. 1, from *The Talmud*, tr. Ben Zion Bokser (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), pp. 219–221. Reprinted by permission.

RABBINIC AUTHORITY

The chief theological paradox of the Talmud is how collected opinions of early Rabbis can count as divine law. Although Judaism traces its oral law back to Moses, the Mishnah and Talmud are, quite obviously, only the collected sayings of the Tannaim and Amoraim. Early Rabbis themselves were aware of this paradox and provide an answer. In this selection from Baba Mezia (one of the most famous sections of the Talmud), they explain that the majority position held by the carriers of oral law in fact becomes the law. At that time, the sages of the Talmud were the carriers.

MISHNA 8: As cheating is prohibited in buying or selling, so it is in words. (How so?) One must not ask the price of a thing when he does not intend to buy it. To a person who has repented one must not say, Remember your former acts. To a descendant from proselytes one must not say, Remember the acts of your parents. As it is written "And a stranger you shall not vex, nor shall you oppress him" (Exodus 22:20).

GEMARA: We studied in the Mishnah (Eduyot 7:7) that if a pottery stove was cut into tiles, and cemented over with sand placed between the tiles, R. Eliezer declared it unsusceptible to ritual uncleanness, while the other Sages declared it susceptible. This was the Akhnai Stove.

Why was it called Akhnai? Said R. Judah in the name of Samuel: They surrounded it with arguments as a snake winds its body around an object, and declared it unclean. It has been taught: On that day R. Eliezer marshaled every conceivable argument, but they did not accept them. Then he said: If the law is according to my views, let this carob tree prove it. Thereupon the carob tree was thrust to a distance of a hundred cubits from its place, and some say four hundred. They replied to him: We adduce no evidence from a carob tree. Again he said to them: If the law is in accordance with my views, let the stream of water prove it, and at once the stream of water flowed in the opposite direction. But they said: We adduce no evidence from a stream of water. Again he said to them: If the law agrees with my views, let the walls of the academy prove it, and the walls of the academy began to bend and were about to fall. R. Joshua rebuked them, saying: If scholars argue on a point of law, what business is it of yours? The walls did not fall out of respect for R. Joshua, but they did not become straight again out of respect for R. Eliezer.

Thereupon he said: If the law is in accordance with my views, let them prove it from heaven. A heavenly voice came forth, saying: What have you against R. Eliezer? The law is as he propounds it in all instances. R. Joshua then stood up and quoted: "It is not in the heavens" (Dt 30:12). What did he mean by quoting: "It is not in the heavens"? Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah has already been given at Sinai, and we pay no attention to heavenly voices, for You have written at Sinai in the Torah: "Incline after the majority" (Ex 23:2).

R. Nathan met the prophet Elijah and he asked him: What did the Holy One, praised be He, do at that time? He replied: He laughed, and He said: My children have won over me, my children have won over me!

Source: *Talmud, Baba Mezia* 59a–59b, from *The Talmud*, tr. Bokser, pp. 184–185.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The notion of resurrection of the dead is not readily present in the Tanakh. The book of Job, for example, poetically pronounces against it: "As a cloud breaks up and disperses, so no one who goes down to Sheol ever comes back." The idea of resurrection took hold in post-exilic writings and by the time of the Rabbinic period had become an important tenet of Judaism. In this selection from the Talmud, several Rabbis debate the issues surrounding the resurrected.

MISHNA I: All Israel has a share in the world to come. As it reads: "And thy people—they will all be righteous, for ever will they possess the land, the sprout of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may glorify myself" (Isaiah 9:21). The following have no share in the world to come: He who says that there is no allusion in the Torah concerning resurrection, and he who says that the Torah was not given by Heaven. . . .

GEMARA: Is he who does not believe that the resurrection is hinted at in the Torah such a criminal that he loses his share in the world to come? It was taught: He denies resurrection therefore he will not have a share in it, as punishment corresponds to the deed; for all retributions of the Holy One are in correspondence with man's doing. . . .

Queen Cleopatra questioned Rabbi Mair thus: I am aware that the dead will be restored. As it reads: "And men will blossom out of the city like herbs of the earth" (Psalms 72:16). My question, however, is this: When they will be restored, will they be naked or dressed? And he answered: This may be drawn by an *a fortiori* conclusion from wheat. A grain of wheat which is buried naked comes out dressed in so many garments: the upright, who are buried in their dress, so much the more will they come out dressed in many garments. . . .

Cæsar questioned Rabbon Gamaliel: You say that the dead will be restored. Does not the corpse become dust? How, then, can dust be restored? And the daughter of Cæsar said to Rabbi Gamaliel: Leave the question to me and I myself will answer it. And she said to her father: If there were two potters in our city, of whom one should make a pot from

water and the other from clay, to which of them would you give preference? And he said: Certainly to him who creates from water; for if he is able to create from water, he is undoubtedly able to create from clay. And she said: This is an answer to your question.

The school of Rabbi Ismael taught: One may learn it from glass-ware, which are made by human beings, and if they break there is a remedy for them, as they can be renewed: human beings, who are created by the spirit of the Lord, so much the more will they be restored. . . .

Antoninus said to Rabbi: The body and the soul of a human may free themselves on the day of judgment by Heaven. How so? The body may say: The soul has sinned; for since she has departed I lie in the grave like a stone. And the soul may say: The body has sinned; for since I am separated from it, I fly in the air like a bird. And he answered: I will give you a parable to which this is similar: A human king, who had an excellent garden which contained very fine figs, appointed two watchmen for it—one of whom was blind, and the other had no feet. He who was without feet said to the one who was blind: I see in the garden fine figs. Take me on your shoulders, and I shall get them, and we shall consume them. He did so, and while on his shoulders he took them off, and both consumed them. And when the owner of the garden came and did not find the figs, and questioned them what became of them, the blind one answered: Have I, then, eyes to see them, that you should suspect my taking them? And the lame one answered: Have I, then, feet to go there? The owner then put the lame one on the shoulders of the one who was blind, and punished them together. So also the Holy One puts the soul in the body and punishes them together. As it reads: "He will call to the heavens above, and to the earth beneath, to judge his people" (Psalms 1:4). "To the heavens above" means the soul, and, "to the earth beneath" means the body.

Source: Sanhedrin 11, from *New Edition of the Babylonian Talmud* (Boston: The Talmud Society, 1918).

COMING OF THE MESSIAH

During the Babylonian exile, the Jews lost hope in the ability of any present leader to return Israel to its former glory and so they placed their hopes in a future Messiah, or anointed one. The notion gained momentum and complexity during post-exilic times, and by the Rabbinic period the coming of the Messiah was linked to the culmination of human history and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. In the following selections from the Talmud, several Rabbis debate about the events leading up to the Messiah's arrival.

The rabbis taught: In this Sabbatic period in which the son of David will appear in the first year there will be fulfilled what is written: "And I caused it to rain upon one city, and upon another city I caused it not to rain" (Amos 4:7). In the second year, arrows of famine will be sent. In the third, a great famine, from which men, women, and children, pious men

and men of good deeds will die, and the Torah will be forgotten by their scholars. In the fourth there will be abundance, and not abundance. In the fifth there will be great abundance, and the people will eat, drink, and enjoy themselves, and the Torah will return to her scholars. In the sixth, voices will be heard saying that the Messiah is near. In the seventh, war will be, and at the end of the seventh, the son of David will come. Said Rabbi Joseph: Were there not many Sabbatical periods which were like this, but still he did not come? Said Abayi: Were then the above-mentioned voices heard in the sixth? And was there in the seventh war? And secondly, has it then happened in the same order as said above? . . .

Rabbi Jehudah said: The generation in which the son of David will come, the houses of assembly will be converted into houses of prostitution. Galilee will be destroyed. The place called Gablan will be astonished. Men of the borders of Palestine will travel from one city to another, but will find no favor. The wisdom of the scribes will be corrupted. Men fearing sin will be hated. The leaders of that generation will have the nature of dogs. . . .

Rabbi Nehuraia taught: The generation in which the son of David will come, young men will make pale the faces of the old, old men will rise before youth, a daughter will rebel against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, the leaders of the generation will have the nature of dogs, and a son will not be ashamed when his father reproaches him.

Rabbi Nehemiah said: The generation in which the son of David will come, insolence will increase, an evil man will be honored, respect will be missed, the vine will give forth its fruit abundantly; wine, however, will be dear, and all the governments will be turned over to heretics (will embrace the religion of the heretics), and no preaching will avail. And this is as to Rabbi Itz'hak, who said that the son of David will not come unless all governments will be turned over to heretics. Where is to be found a hint to this in the Scripture? (Leviticus 13:13): "It is all turned white, he is clean."

Source: Sanhedrin 11, from *New Edition of the Babylonian Talmud*.

UNITY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

In addition to debates on fine points of law and theology, Rabbis and other Jewish writers for hundreds of years had developed legends and embellishments surrounding the historical narrative in the Tanakh—from creation to the restoration. The stories are scattered throughout the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Talmud, and Midrash and are even found in early Christian writings. The following is one such legend explaining how the Ten Commandments are woven into a unified whole.

The Ten Commandments are so closely interwoven, that the breaking of one leads to the breaking of another. But there is a particularly strong bond of union between the first five commandments, which are written on one table, and the last five, which were on the other table. The first commandment: "I am the Lord, thy God," corresponds to the sixth: "Thou shalt not kill," for the murderer slays the image of God. The second: "Thou shalt have

no strange gods before me," corresponds to the seventh: "Thou shalt not commit adultery," for conjugal faithlessness is as grave a sin as idolatry, which is faithlessness to God. The third commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain," corresponds to the eighth: "Thou shalt not steal," for theft leads to false oath. The fourth commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," corresponds to the ninth: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," for he who bears false witness against his neighbor commits as grave a sin as if he had borne false witness against God, saying that He had not created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, the Sabbath. The fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother," corresponds to the tenth: "Covet not thy neighbor's wife," for one who indulges this lust produces children who will not honor their true father, but will consider a stranger their father.

The Ten Commandments, which God first revealed on Mount Sinai, correspond in their character to the ten words of which He had made use at the creation of the world. The first commandment: "I am the Lord, thy God," corresponds to the first word at the creation: "Let there be light," for God is the eternal light. The second commandment: "Thou shalt have no strange gods before me," corresponds to the second word: "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." For God said: "Choose between Me and the idols; between Me, the fountain of living waters, and the idols, the stagnant waters." The third commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain," corresponds to the word: "Let the waters be gathered together," for as little as water can be gathered in a cracked vessel, so can a man maintain his possession which he has obtained through false oaths. The fourth commandment: "Remember to keep the Sabbath holy," corresponds to the word: "Let the earth bring forth grass," for he who truly observes the Sabbath will receive good things from God without having to labor for them, just as the earth produces grass that need not be sown. For at the creation of man it was God's intention that he be free from sin, immortal, and capable of supporting himself by the products of the soil without toil. The fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother," corresponds to the word: "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven," for God said to man: "I gave thee two lights, thy father and thy mother, treat them with care." The sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill," corresponds to the word: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature," for God said: "Be not like the fish, among whom the great swallow the small." The seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery," corresponds to the word: "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," for God said: "I chose for thee a spouse, abide with her." The eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not steal," corresponds to the word: "Behold, I have given you every herb-bearing seed," for none, said God, should touch his neighbor's goods, but only that which grows free as the grass, which is the common property of all. The ninth commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," corresponds to the word: "Let us make man in our image." Thou, like thy neighbor, art made in My image, hence bear not false witness

against thy neighbor. The tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not covet the wife of thy neighbor," corresponds to the tenth word of the creation: "It is not good for man to be alone," for God said: "I created thee a spouse, and let not one among ye covet his neighbor's wife."

Source: Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. 3, ch. 2 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909).

MEDIEVAL JUDAISM

THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH: MAIMONIDES

Judaism has resisted the formulation of creeds or other statements of belief, perhaps in part because of the dialogical nature of the Talmud and its other principal theological works. Nevertheless, the medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1135–1204) developed a list of thirteen principles of Jewish faith, which was embraced by Judaism and, in much abbreviated form, appears in most Jewish prayer books today. The following is from Maimonides' original discussion of the principles.

The First Foundation is to believe in the existence of the Creator, blessed be He. This means that there exists a Being that is complete in all ways and He is the cause of all else that exists. He is what sustains their existence and the existence of all that sustains them. It is inconceivable that He would not exist, for if He would not exist then all else would cease to exist as well, nothing would remain. And if we would imagine that everything other than He would cease to exist, this would not cause His, God's, blessed be He, existence to cease or be diminished. Independence and mastery is to Him alone, God, blessed be His Name, for He needs nothing else and is sufficient unto himself. He does not need the existence of anything else. All that exists apart from Him, the angels, the universe and all that is within it, all these things are dependent on Him for their existence. . . .

The Second Foundation is the unity of God, Blessed be His Name. In other words, to believe that this being, which is the cause of all, is one. This does not mean one as in one of a pair nor one like a species [which encompasses many individuals] nor one as in one object that is made up of many elements nor as a single simple object which is infinitely divisible. Rather, He, God, Blessed be His Name, is a unity unlike any other possible unity. . . .

The Third Foundation is that He is not physical. This means to believe that the One whom we have mentioned is not a body and His powers are not physical. The concepts of physical bodies such as movement, rest, or existence in a particular place cannot be applied to Him. Such things cannot be part of His nature nor can they happen to Him. Therefore the Sages of blessed memory stated that the concepts of combination and separation do not apply to Him and they said, "Above there is no sitting nor standing, no separation nor combination." The prophet says, "To whom can you compare Me? To what am I equal? Says the Holy One" (Isaiah 40:25). If He would be a physical body He would be comparable to physical bodies. . . .