

# THE STRANDS OF WISDOM TRADITION IN INTERTESTAMENTAL JUDAISM: ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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## Summary

*The Jewish wisdom corpus tends to receive a different treatment from OT and NT scholars. Whereas OT scholars tend to shy away from any schematisation due to the complexity of the wisdom tradition, NT scholars do not always perceive sufficiently the distinctions within the wisdom material. This article will attempt to create a balance between these two positions. We will elucidate the intertestamental Jewish sapiential tradition, and identify four strands—the Torah-centred, the Spirit-centred, the Apocalyptic and the Qumranian wisdom tradition—which are rooted in the OT. Moreover, this article will show the origins, developments and main characteristics of these four strands of Jewish wisdom tradition.*

## I. Introduction

The objective of this article is to contribute to the understanding of the Jewish wisdom tradition in the intertestamental period (ITP) by introducing an elementary classification. Most OT scholars tend to shy away from any categorisation or developmental models of the vast array of Jewish wisdom literature. They often focus on the wisdom features in individual writings, and frequently assume a linear development of one single Jewish wisdom tradition.<sup>1</sup> This kind of thinking may have led some other (NT) scholars to treat the collection

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. C.H. Bullock, *An Introduction to the Poetic Books of the Old Testament (The Wisdom and Songs of Israel)* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 38-41; D.K. Berry, *An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 9; J.L. Crenshaw, *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions: Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* (Macon: Mercer University, 1995), 5-11; J.L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction (Revised and Enlarged)* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998), 227-29.

of Jewish wisdom material too generally, without doing justice to or recognising sufficiently the various distinctions within it.<sup>2</sup> Scott, for example, comments that 'The Wisdom literature of Israel has always posed problems for biblical scholars, because of its consistent defiance of attempts at schematization or simple categorization.'<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there seems to be no consensus amongst scholars on the number of wisdom traditions. On the one hand, for example, Van Imschoot argues that there were two strands of wisdom tradition—rational/practical wisdom and popular/prophetic wisdom—which merged after the exile with the result that Wisdom became identified with the Torah and the Spirit.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Breck argues that in the ITP a bifurcation took place within the sapiential tradition: one tradition identified Wisdom with Torah, and another identified Wisdom and Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Hence, our agenda is formulated by two groups of questions. First, is there only one Jewish wisdom tradition or are there more? Second, if there are more, how did they come into existence, how did they develop, what are their characteristics and how are they related to one another? We want to maintain the balance between, on the one hand, preserving the distinctive contributions of each sapiential writing to the concept of W/wisdom, although this should not prevent us from searching for a certain level of schematisation (contra OT scholarship in general), and, on the other hand, perceiving the Jewish sapiential corpus to consist of one substance (as some NT scholars do).<sup>6</sup> The nature of this article is that of a survey of the various wisdom movements (from the OT to the ITP) in order to provide especially the NT scholar with a classification for approaching the Jewish wisdom corpus. This paper, then, will attempt to demonstrate that the Jewish sapiential tradition

<sup>2</sup> E.g. J.A. Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Corinthians 1.18-3.20 against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 60-62, 142; N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 264-65; M.J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1970); W.M. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 180-83.

<sup>3</sup> M. Scott, *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus* (JSNTS 71; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 21.

<sup>4</sup> P. Van Imschoot, 'Sagesse et Esprit dans l'Ancien Testament', *RB* 47 (1938) 23-49.

<sup>5</sup> J. Breck, *Spirit of Truth: The Origins of Johannine Pneumatology* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary, 1991), 88, 92.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'Wisdom' will be used to denote the personification of an attribute of God; in all other cases we will use 'wisdom' (for instance, to express that which God or Wisdom gives or mediates).

was no homogeneous ‘melting pot’, but that there existed within the ITP four distinct ways of understanding the concept of W/wisdom, which were rooted in the OT wisdom material.

## II. The OT Origins of the Intertestamental Jewish Wisdom Tradition

According to texts that describe the early stage of the formation of Israel’s faith, wisdom was given to individuals for skill in leadership (Joseph, Joshua) or artistic skill (the skilled men of Ex. 28:3, Bezaleel) and this charismatic wisdom was attributed to the divine Spirit (Gn. 41:38-39; Ex. 35:30-36:1; Dt. 34:9).<sup>7</sup> Concerning David it is said that he had wisdom (2 Sa. 14:20), and, in the light of 2 Samuel 23:2 and 1 Chronicles 28:12, it would probably not be too wide of the mark to attribute this wisdom to the Spirit. However, according to the retrospective post-exilic perspective of the Chronicler, a gradual change emerged in the concept of the source of wisdom after the establishment of the dynastic monarchy as an institution. It was David’s prayer that Yahweh would also grant Solomon this wisdom so that Solomon would observe the Torah and have success (1 Ch. 22:12-13), and Solomon did indeed receive wisdom from Yahweh to lead Israel (2 Ch. 1:7-12). Solomon became the prototypical wise king, modelled on the pattern of Deuteronomy 17:18-20, and subsequent ‘wise’ kings, such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah, were those who observed the Torah (2 Ch. 14:4; 17:3-9; 24:6-9; 29:1-31:21; 34:14-35:19).<sup>8</sup> However, although Solomon’s wisdom was divine in origin, it could not be attributed to the Spirit any more for there is no reference at all to the Spirit’s activity in Solomon’s life. Moreover, whereas Solomon received divine wisdom in order to observe the Torah, subsequent kings observed the Torah in order to become or to be deemed wise (cf. Dt. 4:5-6). Hence, based on the Mosaic paradigm of Deuteronomy 4:5-6, the (observance of the)

<sup>7</sup> Although it is not mentioned explicitly, it is possible that the Spirit upon Moses and the seventy elders also endowed them with wisdom for leadership and administration of justice (Nu. 11:16-17, 25), especially considering that Joshua received authority and the Spirit of wisdom *because* Moses had laid his hands on him (Nu. 27:18-20; Dt. 34:9).

<sup>8</sup> J. Blenkinsopp, ‘Wisdom in the Chronicler’s Work’, in L.G. Perdue, B.B. Scott, W.J. Wiseman (ed.), *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 22-26; L. Kalugila, *The Wise King: Studies in Royal Wisdom as Divine Revelation in the Old Testament and Its Environment* (Lund: Gleerup, 1980), 102-122.

Torah had become the locus (or even source) of wisdom, i.e. the (observance of the) Torah had become the means of acquiring or demonstrating wisdom.

This strand of deuteronomic or nomistic wisdom is further developed in Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>9</sup> In post-exilic times, with the return to Jerusalem of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Torah became the constituting factor in the reconstructed covenant community, and the study and observance of the Torah seem to have become Israel's basic orientation, whereby the 'scribes'—the teachers and interpreters of the Torah—were the inspired sages (see especially Ezr. 7; Ne. 8-10).<sup>10</sup> Ezra's divine inspiration is essentially divine wisdom to interpret the Torah (Ezr. 7:11-26; cf. 'the Torah of God in Ezra's hand' in 7:14 with 'the wisdom of God in Ezra's hand' in 7:25).<sup>11</sup> This inspired interpretation of the Torah is also called 'charismatic exegesis'.<sup>12</sup> The Torah had become the vehicle of new revelations and exegesis; the means of new access to the divine will.<sup>13</sup> The Psalter also presents Torah-orientated wisdom teaching, in which the Torah is portrayed as the source of true ethical conduct, i.e. the Torah contains moral

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<sup>9</sup> The prophetic tradition also had a major influence: a development can be traced from the ecstatic prophet (Elijah, Elisha) to the classical prophet (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, etc.), to the 'messenger' in Chronicles (Amasai, Azariah, Jehaziel, Zechariah), and finally to the text interpreter (Ezra). In contrast to the last category, the first three categories were inspired by the Spirit. For the development of the last three categories, see W.M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period* (JSOTS 197; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> Blenkinsopp, 'Wisdom', 23-25; L. Neve, *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Tokyo: Seibunsha, 1972), 113-23. In the OT the 'scribe' was not yet a defined class or office.

<sup>11</sup> Levison wants to attribute Ezra's divine inspiration implicitly to the Spirit on the basis of an association between Ne. 8 and 9 (J.R. Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 195-96, 207). However, although Ne. 9:20 attributes Israel's instruction (in Torah?) during her journey in the wilderness to the Spirit (just as Ne. 9:30 retrospectively attributes prophetic inspiration to the Spirit), this does not necessarily mean that Ezra's contemporary inspiration could also be attributed to the Spirit (just as post-exilic 'prophecy' was not [explicitly] attributed to the Spirit any more).

<sup>12</sup> D.E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 339-46; D.E. Aune, 'Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity', in J.H. Charlesworth and C.A. Evans (ed.), *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 126-50. Cf. M. Fishbane, *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Indianapolis: Indiana University, 1989), 67-69. In using the term 'charismatic', we want to denote divine origin, but not necessarily a pneumatic origin.

<sup>13</sup> Fishbane, *Garments*, 66-67.

wisdom which leads to blessing/life for those who meditate on it and observe its commands (e.g. Pss. 1, 19, 37, 49, 119).<sup>14</sup>

Yet, another distinct way of understanding wisdom was developing under the influence of the prophetic tradition.<sup>15</sup> During the exilic and post-exilic period the concept of wisdom was developed, and culminated in the personified or hypostatized<sup>16</sup> figure of Wisdom (Pr. 1:20-33; 8:1-9:12; Jb. 28).<sup>17</sup> Wisdom is depicted as the source of right ethical behaviour (see especially Pr. 1-9); acceptance or rejection of Wisdom and her teaching leads respectively to (long) life, peace and blessing or to death and disaster (Pr. 1:24-33; 2:1-3:2, 16-18; 8:35-36; 9:11-18). Wisdom is even portrayed as the source of life (Pr. 3:18; 16:22), and she invites people to come to her banquet so that they may live (Pr. 9:1-6). Although Yahweh is the source of Wisdom (Pr. 2:6; 8:22; Jb. 11:5-6; 28:23; Ps. 51:6), Wisdom may occasionally still be associated with the Spirit. Proverbs 1:23 says that Wisdom pours out her רִיחַ, which could refer to the divine Spirit, in which case the Spirit reveals Wisdom's words to people.<sup>18</sup> Psalm 51 possibly indicates that the Spirit is the means by which Yahweh teaches wisdom to the psalmist, which would result in the creation of a pure heart (vv. 6, 10-11).<sup>19</sup> The strongest piece of evidence, however, is found in Job 32:8, where Elihu declares that it is the רִיחַ in a man, the breath of Shaddai, that gives him wisdom. In Job 32:6-13 Elihu challenges the traditional concept that wisdom comes with age, and he

<sup>14</sup> Cf. G. Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (London: SCM, 1972), 49; S. Terrien, 'Wisdom in the Psalter', in Perdue, Scott, and Wiseman (ed.), *In Search of Wisdom*, 51-72.

<sup>15</sup> R.B.Y. Scott, *The Way of Wisdom in the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 129-32. Yet wisdom also influenced the prophetic tradition (Scott, *Way*, 122-29).

<sup>16</sup> We use the definition of W.O.E. Oesterley and G.H. Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue: An Introduction to the Study of Judaism from the New Testament Period* (London: Pitman, 1911), 195.

<sup>17</sup> For a (post-)exilic date of Pr. and Jb., see R.E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC 22; Nashville: Nelson, 1998), xx; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (2 Vols.; London: SCM, 1974), 1:153; 2:97 n. 289. Bullock, *Introduction*, 68, 161-68, however, prefers a pre-exilic date. Pr. 1-9 probably depicts a (post-)exilic wisdom theology, whereas the rest of Pr. reflects wisdom thought from as early as the time of the monarchy.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. W. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (London: SCM, 1970), 274; W. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 43.

<sup>19</sup> M.E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (WBC 20; Dallas: Word, 1990), 9-10, and H.J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 501, give a post-exilic date for Ps. 51.

claims, despite his young age, to have wisdom himself, a wisdom from the Spirit that surpasses the wisdom of his friends. Moreover, 'the breath of Shaddai' in Job 33:4 functions as a metaphor for the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it seems possible that in this strand the Spirit functions as the power of Wisdom, in that the Spirit mediates wisdom to people. In this case, we may include the Spirit-inspired interpretation of Wisdom's teaching in our definition of charismatic exegesis.

The third strand of wisdom is the emergence of apocalyptic wisdom as another offshoot of the prophetic tradition that was influenced by the wisdom tradition, as is illustrated in the books of Ezekiel and Daniel.<sup>21</sup> In Ezekiel 1-39 the Spirit inspires and guides Ezekiel (Ezk. 2:2; 3:12-14, 24; 8:3; 11:1, 5, 24-25; 37:1). In Ezekiel 40-48, however, Ezekiel's apocalyptic visions are no longer attributed to the Spirit, but 'merely' to divine inspiration, and it is the *angelus interpretes* who functions as Ezekiel's visionary guide and who gives revelatory understanding (Ezk. 40:3-4; *passim*).<sup>22</sup> Daniel 1-6 portrays Daniel as an 'exegete' of dreams through wisdom mediated by the Spirit (Dn. 2:19-23; 4:8-9, 18; cf. 5:11-14), but in Daniel 7-12, Daniel is the receiver of apocalyptic visions in which an angel plays the role of interpreter (Dn. 7:16; 8:16-19; 9:22; 10:14, 21; 11:2). It is this revelatory understanding mediated to the seer by the *angelus interpretes* in order to understand the meaning of past texts, prophecies, or future events through the medium of apocalyptic visions that we would call apocalyptic wisdom.<sup>23</sup> This apocalyptic wisdom, mediated by an *angelus interpretes* to the visionary, had replaced the charismatic revelation and wisdom mediated by the Spirit to the prophet. Moreover, if apocalyptic wisdom is the key to the disclosure of the meaning of the apocalyptic vision, we can consequently broaden again our definition of charismatic exegesis.

<sup>20</sup> The majority of scholars opt for the Spirit as the referent of רִיחַ in Jb. 32:8 (e.g. J.E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 433-34; H.H. Rowley, *Job* [Nashville: Nelson, 1970], 265; M.H. Pope, *Job: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* [AB 15; New York: Doubleday, 1965], 212-16; Von Rad, *Wisdom*, 55-56; Neve, *Spirit*, 87-88; Hildebrandt, *Theology*, 19-20, 57-58).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Aune, *Prophecy*, 112-14; S.J. De Vries, 'Observations on Quantitative and Qualitative Time in Wisdom and Apocalyptic', in J.G. Gammie, W.A. Brueggemann, W.L. Humphreys, J.M. Ward (ed.), *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 263-76; M.E. Stone, 'Apocalyptic Literature', in M.E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 384-89.

<sup>22</sup> Only Ezk. 43:5 contains one more reference to the Spirit.

<sup>23</sup> Zc. 1:7-6:8 portrays a similar concept of an *angelus interpretes* revealing the meaning of apocalyptic visions.

In conclusion, the OT depicts the start and gradual development of three strands or varieties of wisdom tradition—the Torah-centred, the Spirit-centred and the Apocalyptic wisdom tradition. In every strand, charismatic exegesis seems to be the hermeneutical key through the mediation of divine wisdom by respectively Yahweh, the Spirit and the *angelus interpretes*, to respectively the ‘scribe’, sage and seer.<sup>24</sup> Thus, adopting a broad definition, charismatic exegesis is the divinely inspired interpretation of the meaning of a sacred text, teaching, or vision through the mediation of revelatory wisdom to a person.<sup>25</sup> We will now turn to the question: How will these strands develop during the ITP?

### III. The Various Wisdom Strands in Intertestamental Judaism

Looking at the intertestamental Jewish literature, we seem to detect four distinct wisdom strands, which are rooted in and are in continuation with the three OT wisdom strands.<sup>26</sup> As a warning against putting too much weight on the distinctions between these four strands of wisdom tradition, which could result in a division Judaism never hinted at, we want to emphasise that the four strands of wisdom tradition are not mutually exclusive or contradictory. In fact, the four strands of wisdom tradition are more similar than different, and should be seen as four threads twisted around each other to make up the one string or rope of wisdom tradition; i.e. we would better speak of four varieties of one wisdom tradition.

<sup>24</sup> The importance of the cult and the priesthood must nonetheless not be forgotten: Ezra was a priestly ‘scribe’, Ezekiel and Zechariah were priestly prophets, and the cult was the socio-religious context in which they operated (cf. the emphasis on the restoration of the cult in Ezr. 3-10, Ezk. 40-48 and Zc. 4:8-10; 6:12-13).

<sup>25</sup> Aune still had a narrow definition of ‘charismatic exegesis’ in his earlier writing (charismatic exegesis being absent from apocalyptic literature) (Aune, *Prophecy*, 340), but adopts a broader definition in a later article (Aune, ‘Exegesis’, 126-50). Yet, the Spirit-inspired interpretation of Wisdom’s revelatory teaching is not included in his definition.

<sup>26</sup> We distinguish four groups of intertestamental Jewish literature: (i) Diaspora literature, i.e. literature written in Greek and/or outside of Palestine; (ii) Palestinian literature, i.e. non-rabbinic and non-Qumranian literature written in Palestine; (iii) Rabbinic literature; (iv) Qumran literature. Although the literary sources of Diaspora Judaism (category [i]) and Palestinian Judaism (categories [ii]-[iv]) can be distinguished on the basis of language and geography, all of first-century Judaism was nevertheless permeated (in various degrees) by Hellenistic influence (cf. Hengel, *Judaism*).

### 1. The Torah-centred Wisdom Tradition

The first strand of wisdom tradition is the Torah-centred wisdom tradition, which is essentially a continuation of the OT deuteronomic wisdom tradition. This strand of nomistic wisdom is found mainly in Palestinian<sup>27</sup> and rabbinic literature.

*Palestinian Literature.* The book of *Sirach* probably functions as the best representative of (the continuation of) the Torah-centred wisdom tradition.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, *Sirach* is probably also influenced by the Spirit-centred wisdom tradition in the OT in at least two ways: (i) in *Sirach*, Wisdom is clearly personified/hypostatized (4:11-19; 6:18-31; 14:20-15:10; 24:1-22; 51:13-26), and especially *Sirach* 24:1-22 owes much to Proverbs 8:22-31; (ii) Wisdom is once evidently associated with the Spirit (39:6).<sup>29</sup> In *Sirach* the relationship between Wisdom and Torah culminates in an explicit identification: 'All this [i.e. Wisdom] is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob' (24:23; cf. 15:1; 19:20; 21:11; 45:5).<sup>30</sup> The Torah is the locus or embodiment of Wisdom, i.e. Wisdom indwells the Torah.<sup>31</sup> Because Wisdom is found in the Torah, the acquisition of W/wisdom is necessarily linked with the study of the Torah: study, meditation and observance of the Torah leads to W/wisdom (1:26; 6:37; 15:1; 21:11). Moreover, Wisdom is given to those who are prepared to seek her, to those who are prepared to work for the acquisition of wisdom

<sup>27</sup> Excluding the apocalyptic literature of Palestinian Judaism, which represents the third strand of intertestamental wisdom tradition.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. P.W. Skehan and A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 75, who say that *Sirach*'s theological outlook is Deuteronomic.

<sup>29</sup> For the role of the Spirit in *Sirach*, see Davis, *Wisdom*, 16-24. *Sir.* 48:24 may also possibly contain a reference to the divine Spirit.

<sup>30</sup> *Sir.* 24:25-29 even goes on to say that the Torah overflows with wisdom, denoting the abundance of wisdom available in the Torah. For a fuller investigation of the identification of Wisdom and Torah in *Sirach*, see E.J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics* (WUNT 2.16; Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 69-79.

<sup>31</sup> It is at this point that Breck thinks the one wisdom tradition splits. Breck mentions that *Sirach*'s identification of Wisdom with Torah marked a bifurcation within the sapiential tradition: one tradition, represented by *Sirach*, became the background for Rabbinic Judaism, while the other, represented by Wisdom of Solomon, identified Wisdom and Spirit, and influenced, for instance, John's Gospel (Breck, *Spirit*, 88, 92). However, Breck seems to have overlooked three things: (i) the Torah-centred wisdom tradition had already started in the OT; (ii) instead of two there are four strands of wisdom tradition in the ITP; (iii) *Sirach* also associates Wisdom and Spirit.



and to those who observe the Torah, because she will test those who want to follow her (2:1-17; 4:16-19; 6:18-27; 15:1-10). Although the quest for Wisdom is laborious, although her testing is severe, and although only a few perceive her (6:21-22), the fruits of Wisdom are sweet: blessing, long life and right ethical conduct (1:11-20; 4:11-15; 14:20-15:6; 51:15). In fact, life and death are a matter of choice, the consequences of accepting or rejecting Wisdom (4:16-19; 15:15-17; cf. the doctrine of retribution in Dt. 28). Wisdom is inviting people to 'eat' and 'drink' of her, which are metaphors for accepting her teaching/instruction, so that they may live (24:19-22; cf. 15:3; Pr. 9:1-6). As in the OT, charismatic exegesis seems to be the hermeneutical key to unlock the moral wisdom hidden in the Torah.<sup>32</sup>

The wisdom poem in *Baruch* 3:9-4:4 has many resemblances to Sirach. Personified/hypostatized Wisdom dwells in Israel and is embodied in the Torah, i.e. the Torah is the locus of Wisdom (3:36-4:1).<sup>33</sup> Obedience to the Torah is the path to Wisdom, which leads to blessing and (long) life (3:9, 14; 4:1). All who accept Wisdom, i.e. all who study and observe the Torah, will live, but those who reject her will die (4:1; cf. 3:10-13 where the exile is portrayed as the result of Israel rejecting Wisdom). This poem is essentially an invitation to Israel to recognise Wisdom/Torah as a beacon leading to life (4:2-3; cf. Ps. 119:105; Pr. 6:23). And if Yahweh's Torah contains the Wisdom necessary for life, then its interpretation is expected to happen by means of charismatic exegesis.<sup>34</sup>

*Rabbinic Literature.*<sup>35</sup> In the rabbinic literature we find a similar picture to that in the Palestinian literature. In *Pirke Abot*<sup>36</sup> there is

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Fishbane, *Garments*, 67.

<sup>33</sup> For more evidence, see Schnabel, *Law*, 95-99.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. W. Harrelson, 'Wisdom Hidden and Revealed According to Baruch (Baruch 3.9-4.4)', in E. Ulrich, J.W. Wright, R.P. Carroll, P.R. Davies (ed.), *Priests, Prophets and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp* (JSOTS 14; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 159, 167. Other Palestinian writings express the same view. In Tobit we find the implication that only Israel has wisdom because Israel has the Torah (4:18-19). Judith has wisdom because the disposition of her heart is right (8:29), i.e. because of her right observance of the Torah (8:5-8). The *Psalms of Solomon* contain an implicit association between wisdom and Torah (Schnabel, *Law*, 112-19).

<sup>35</sup> Rabbinic material is difficult to date, but when parallels are found in datable writings, such as Philo, Qumran literature, Wis., Sir., Ba., then there is a case for taking rabbinic material to have come from the first century or earlier, or at least to reflect first-century thought.

<sup>36</sup> *Pirke Abot* was edited about AD 225, but its earliest sayings might go back to the time of Sirach or even to parts of biblical wisdom (I.B. Gottlieb, 'Pirke Abot and Biblical Wisdom', *VT* 40 [1990] 152-53, 162-63).

implicit evidence for the correlation between wisdom and Torah (e.g. *mAb.* 2.7; 3.17).<sup>37</sup> The message of Abot is essentially the invitation to study and observe the Torah (*mAb.* 1.15; 2.2, 7, 14, 16; 3.3-6; 4.6, 9-10; 5.22; *bAb.* 6.2-7), and to absorb the wisdom of the rabbis (*mAb.* 2.9; 4.1) because obedience and devotion to the Torah is the path to wisdom, which in turn leads to righteousness and life (*mAb.* 2.7; *bAb.* 6.7). Study of the Torah, as *bAb.* 6.1 reveals, even makes one a friend of Yahweh, the true source of wisdom, which leads to great benefits: (i) the person concerned becomes a source of wisdom for other people; and (ii) receives divine insight into the hidden meaning of the Torah; i.e. the hidden wisdom in the Torah will be unlocked/revealed to him through divine aid (charismatic exegesis). The rabbis are the ones who exclusively hold the key to the right interpretation of the Torah through charismatic exegesis of the Torah.<sup>38</sup> Other rabbinic writings give the same picture. Torah and W/wisdom are closely associated, if not identified (*bM.K.* 25b-26a; *jM.K.* 3.7; *GenR.* 17.5; *LevR.* 25.1; *NumR.* 5.8). The Torah is (a tree/source of) life, and therefore, study and observance of the Torah leads to blessing and life (*bBer.* 16b; 61b; *LevR.* 25.1; *NumR.* 5.8). Moreover, the study of the Torah leads to wisdom, which in turn leads to life (*bBB.* 9b).

*Diaspora Literature.*<sup>39</sup> In 4 *Maccabees* wisdom is associated with Torah; the Torah is the locus of wisdom, and through the study and observance of the Torah one acquires wisdom (1:15-17).<sup>40</sup> *Josephus* also remains in the theological tradition of Palestinian Judaism: wisdom is the content of the Torah (*Ant.* 18, 59, 82), and the scribes are those who know and can expound the Torah (*Ant.* 18, 82, 20, 264).<sup>41</sup>

## 2. The Spirit-centred Wisdom Tradition

The Spirit-centred wisdom tradition is the second strand of intertestamental wisdom tradition, as a continuation of the OT strand

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Gottlieb, 'Pirke Abot', 162.

<sup>38</sup> There is, however, no place for the Spirit in rabbinic charismatic exegesis (cf. J. Neusner, 'What "The Rabbis" Thought: A Method and a Result: One Statement on Prophecy in Rabbinic Judaism', in J.C. Reeves, J. Kampen [ed.], *Pursuing the Text* [JSOTS 184; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994], 318).

<sup>39</sup> Although most (wisdom) writings of Diaspora Judaism come under the heading Spirit-centred wisdom, 4 Mac. and the writings of Josephus belong rather to the Torah-centred wisdom tradition.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Schnabel, *Law*, 134-38.

<sup>41</sup> U. Wilckens, Σοφία, in *TDNT* 6:502. Josephus' usage of divine Spirit seems to be limited solely to the biblical period (E. Best, 'The Use and Non-use of *Pneuma* by Josephus', *NovT* 3 [1959] 218-25).

of Spirit-centred wisdom, and is found in Diaspora Judaism. The *Wisdom of Solomon* is the best representative of this strand.<sup>42</sup> We also find in this book the personification/hypostatisation of Wisdom (6:12-11:1). The exact association, if any, between Wisdom and Torah is difficult to determine.<sup>43</sup> Davis suggests that Wisdom's laws (6:17-20; 9:9) are in all probability a reference to the laws of the Torah.<sup>44</sup> However, even if this were to be true, it would still not identify Wisdom and Torah. Schnabel argues that only 2:12, 6:4, 9:9, and 18:4 are possible references to the Torah, and concludes that 'the concept of the (Jewish) law is not developed at all. This makes any attempt at establishing an implicit or explicit identification of wisdom and law impossible, not to speak of the nature of such an identification.'<sup>45</sup> Winston states that Wisdom is nowhere explicitly identified with Torah; Wisdom is more the archetypal Torah, of which the Mosaic Law is but an image, i.e. the teachings of the Torah are *tokens* of divine Wisdom.<sup>46</sup> Wisdom leads people to keep the Torah, yet Wisdom is not equated with the Torah.<sup>47</sup> Wisdom's laws are identical with Wisdom's teaching/instruction (6:17-18), the content of which includes not only the divine commandments but also God's will and purpose in the widest sense of the word. Hence, in *Wisdom of Solomon* the locus of wisdom is not the Torah but rather Wisdom herself, i.e. Wisdom's teaching is the source of wisdom. And accepting or rejecting Wisdom's words leads respectively to life or death; i.e. salvation and damnation are dependent on one's attitude towards Wisdom and her teaching (3:1-19; 6:17-18). Following and receiving Wisdom leads to blessing, ethical guidance, renewal and salvation (immortality) (6:18; 7:27; 8:9-18; 9:11, 17-18). However, the ultimate goal of the pursuit of Wisdom is fellowship/friendship/union with God: '[T]hose who get it [Wisdom's wealth/gifts] obtain

<sup>42</sup> Wis. 1-9, for example, is profoundly influenced by Pr. 1-4, 8-9 (P.W. Skehan, *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom* [CBQ Monograph Series 1; Washington: CBA, 1971], 173-91).

<sup>43</sup> The identification of Wisdom and the divine word is much more explicit (D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 43; New York: Doubleday, 1979], 38, 317).

<sup>44</sup> Davis, *Wisdom*, 178 n.11.

<sup>45</sup> Schnabel, *Law*, 132-34 (quotation from p. 134). Nevertheless Schnabel still believes that a few passages in Wis. may imply such an identification (Schnabel, *Law*, 134).

<sup>46</sup> Winston, *Wisdom*, 42-43.

<sup>47</sup> M.E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and Its Bearing on the New Testament* (London: Heythrop College, 1976), 53. Cf. M. Gilbert, 'Wisdom Literature', in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings*, 311.

friendship with God ... in every generation she [Wisdom] passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God' (7:14, 27; cf. 2:18; 6:18-19). Thus, the final aim of mankind is to have a relationship with God, which is possible by having a relationship with Wisdom; union with God is achieved or mediated through union with Wisdom. The reason for this is that Wisdom herself has an intimate relationship with God (7:25; 8:3-4; 9:4, 9-10). If one sees/experiences Wisdom, one sees/experiences God himself (7:25-26). Moreover, as an initiate in the knowledge of God, she mediates this revelatory knowledge of God to people, which leads to eternal life and intimacy with God (8:4, 13, 18; 9:9-18). Hence, Wisdom is depicted as a soteriological figure, or, from God's perspective, Wisdom can be seen as a circumlocution to describe God in action, especially his communication of saving knowledge to people (cf. Wisdom's salvific role in 10:1-11:1 as a way of describing God's salvific acts in history). Wisdom is given to those who ask God for it in prayer, and the result of the prayer is the gift of the Spirit of Wisdom, i.e. the Spirit who gives or mediates wisdom (7:7; 9:17).<sup>48</sup> The Spirit indwells Wisdom and endows her with power and wisdom (7:22-23; cf. 1:4-6), and consequently functions as the disclosing power of Wisdom and her teaching. Moreover, the gift of (the Spirit of) Wisdom is a free gift from God, given in answer to prayer, which cannot be acquired by any human achievement (7:7; 8:21; 9:17). Concerning hermeneutics, charismatic exegesis can be defined as the Spirit-inspired interpretation of Wisdom's revelatory teaching.

*Philo.*<sup>49</sup> According to Philo, the ultimate goal in life is to envision God, to know and understand God, which leads to immortality (*Quaest. in Ex.* 2:39; *Quod Deus* 142-43). Philo, upholding both the transcendence and immanence of God, asserts that while God cannot be known in himself, he can be known through the lower levels of his Being—λόγος, σοφία and πνεῦμα.<sup>50</sup> Although σοφία is not identified with the Torah, and although other loci of wisdom are creation and

<sup>48</sup> The majority of scholars allow for a wider scope for the recipients of the Spirit than just the ruler/king, e.g. Davis, *Wisdom*, 177 n. 5; Gilbert, 'Wisdom', 310; Isaacs, *Concept*, 46.

<sup>49</sup> Breck argues that Philo was so deeply influenced by Platonic-Stoic philosophy and mystical speculation that it placed Philo well outside mainstream Judaism (Breck, *Spirit*, 100-101). However, Isaacs maintains that Philo remains faithful to his biblical sources and stands firmly in the biblical tradition (Isaacs, *Concept*, 28-29, 50).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Isaacs, *Concept*, 30. Philo can use these terms interchangeably and does not always maintain a systematic distinction between these three concepts.

philosophy, the Torah remains the most important locus of wisdom.<sup>51</sup> Wisdom is needed because human reason alone is unable to comprehend God (*Virt.* 212-13). Wisdom is heavenly food/manna, i.e. spiritual nourishment for the soul (*Leg. All.* 3:161-62; *Quaest. in Gn.* 4:102). Moreover, wisdom leads to friendship with God, in that freedom leads to friendship with God and true freedom is found in wisdom (*Quod Omn. Prob.* 40-44, 59). Wisdom, like light, is not only instrumental in envisioning God, but it also contains knowledge of God, i.e. knowledge of God is enclosed or locked up in wisdom (*Mig.* 39-40). Wisdom is the way to God and also functions as the guide on this way, the end of which is the knowledge and understanding of God (*Quod Deus* 142-43). In *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 13 Wisdom is personified and takes up a role as teacher, who constantly receives those who thirst after her, and to whom she pours forth the inexhaustible stream of pure instruction and wisdom (cf. *Quaest. in Gn.* 4:97-107). As in Wisdom of Solomon, so also in Philo the quest for wisdom is depicted as a sapiential journey, which goes from earthly existence via the way of wisdom to knowledge of and union with God (cf. *Quod Deus* 143, 160; *Post.* 18; *Quaest. in Gn.* 4:140; *Quaest. in Ex.* 4:47).<sup>52</sup> The correlation between πνεῦμα and σοφία seems to be that the divine πνεῦμα provides wisdom which is nourishment for the mind (*Leg. All.* 3:161; cf. *Gig.* 22). Philo even calls the divine πνεῦμα ‘the spirit of wisdom’, denoting that the πνεῦμα gives or mediates wisdom (*Gig.* 24, 27, 47). Thus, the divine πνεῦμα is the mediator of revelatory wisdom which leads to (the knowledge of) God (cf. the divine πνεῦμα providing charismatic wisdom, for instance, to Abraham [*Virt.* 217], Joseph [*Jos.* 116-17], Bezaleel, Moses and the seventy elders [*Gig.* 23-27]). For Philo, charismatic exegesis is the Spirit-inspired interpretation of the deeper, allegorical meaning of the Torah through the mediation of wisdom.<sup>53</sup>

*Joseph and Aseneth.*<sup>54</sup> In *Joseph and Aseneth* wisdom leads to blessing and immortality, which can be deduced from the parallel passages in 8:5; 15:5; 16:16 (‘bread of life and cup of immortality’), 8:9; 19:5 (‘bread of life and cup of blessing’), and 21:21 (‘bread of life and cup of wisdom’). The metaphorical language of eating and

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Davis, *Wisdom*, 52-53.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Davis, *Wisdom*, 49, 52; Wilckens, Σοφία, 6:501.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Davis, *Wisdom*, 52; Levison, *Spirit*, 190-94.

<sup>54</sup> Chesnutt provides a compelling case for the Jewish character of *Joseph and Aseneth* (R.D. Chesnutt, *From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth* [JSPS 16; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995], 71-76, 254).

drinking in these bread-cup passages refers to the ongoing experience of life (cf. Pr. 9:1-6; Sir. 24:19-22).<sup>55</sup> Wisdom and Spirit are closely associated in the person of Joseph (4:7-8; 13:14-15; 21:21), and in 16:14-16 Aseneth eats of the honeycomb, which is (full of) the Spirit of life, i.e. the Spirit that confers/bestows life. By eating from the honeycomb she had also eaten the bread of life and drunk a cup of immortality/wisdom, resulting in her conversion (cf. 15:4-5).<sup>56</sup> This corresponds with 19:11, which describes how Joseph gives to Aseneth, through three kisses, the Spirit of life, of wisdom and of truth, i.e. the Spirit who mediates life, wisdom and truth.<sup>57</sup>

### 3. *The Apocalyptic Wisdom Tradition*

The third strand of wisdom tradition is the Apocalyptic wisdom tradition, which has its roots in the OT and is found in the Palestinian literature. The presupposition of the Apocalyptic wisdom tradition is that the seer/visionary has insight into the heavenly secrets through the medium of visions or dreams, and the meaning of the apocalyptic vision is disclosed by an *angelus interpres* through the mediation of revelatory esoteric knowledge (apocalyptic wisdom).

In 1 *Enoch* the function of the *angelus interpres* to Enoch is that of a visionary guide and of an interpreter through the mediation of esoteric wisdom (Raphael [22:3-13; 32:6], Raguel [23:4-24:5], Michael [24:6-25:6; 60:5-6], Uriel [19:1-2; 21:5-10], unnamed [40:2-3, 9; 43:3-4]). Thus, it is the *angelus interpres* who, through the medium of dreams and visions, mediates charismatic revelation and wisdom in order to disclose/unlock the meaning of the apocalyptic

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Chesnutt, *Death*, 130.

<sup>56</sup> Snger identifies the honeycomb, the bread of life, the heavenly manna/wisdom and the Spirit of life (cf. 16:8, 15-16) (D. Snger, *Antikes Judentum und die Mysterien: Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth* [WUNT 2.5; Tbingen: Mohr, 1980], 192-95).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Burchard, who comments on 19:11 that 'life', 'wisdom' and 'truth' denote three aspects or effects of the Spirit (C. Burchard, 'Joseph and Aseneth', in J.H. Charlesworth [ed.], *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* [2 Vols.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983, 1985], 2:234). Concerning other writings in Diaspora Judaism we can be rather brief. In Aristobulus, Moses is said to be endowed with wisdom and the Spirit (F2.10.4; cf. Wis. 11:1). Personified Wisdom is with God, teaches people divine knowledge (F5a.138.4) and functions as a beacon to life (F5.10). Finally, in F5a.138.2 Wisdom is associated with the light of truth, which is the Spirit (references are taken from C.R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors: Aristobulus* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1995]). In one version of Susanna, Daniel receives a Spirit of discernment/wisdom (Sus. 45 [LXX]).

vision (cf. 37:1-4; 93:1-2).<sup>58</sup> Consequently, charismatic exegesis is the divinely inspired interpretation of a vision or dream to unlock its meaning through the mediation of apocalyptic wisdom. Yahweh is depicted as the source of wisdom (63:2-3), who gives wisdom to the elect, i.e. the wise and the righteous (5:8; 91:10). And this wisdom can be found in the Scriptures; i.e. the Scriptures are the locus of wisdom (and truth) (104:12).<sup>59</sup> Wisdom leads to right ethical conduct, righteousness and (eschatological) salvation/eternal life (5:8-9; 37:4; 48:1); to accept the words of wisdom is to follow Yahweh's way, which is the way of righteousness towards (eschatological) salvation (99:10). Moreover, those who have gained wisdom will become a source of wisdom themselves (82:2-3; 104:12-105:1).

In 4 *Ezra* we find again the *angelus interpretes* who mediates revelatory wisdom to disclose the meaning of Ezra's visions (Uriel [4:1; 5:20; 10:28-40], Jeremiel [4:36], unnamed [2:44-48; 5:31-32]).<sup>60</sup> Preparatory requirements—study of the Torah, devotion to wisdom, fasting—seem to be necessary for receiving apocalyptic visions (13:53-55; 14:23-36). The Torah is the source of life, in that obedience to the Torah leads to life and eschatological salvation (9:7-13, 31; 14:22, 30). However, disobedience to the Torah leads to punishment and damnation (9:7-13). Thus, the Torah as *ius talionis*, as the criterion against which people are judged, has an eschatological-salvific function: eschatological salvation and damnation are dependent on one's present attitude towards the Torah (7:24, 72, 79-81; 8:56).<sup>61</sup> The Torah is also identified with wisdom (7:72; 8:12); study of and obedience to the Torah leads to wisdom (7:72; 8:12; cf. 13:53-55).<sup>62</sup> The seer who has received esoteric wisdom becomes a source of wisdom himself (12:36-38; 14:25-26, 37-48). In 8:1-6 *Ezra* struggles with the fact that 'many have been

<sup>58</sup> Once it is mentioned that the Spirit mediates revelation to Enoch (91:1), but this one occasion stands in sharp contrast to the numerous references to an *angelus interpretes*. The only two other references to the Spirit refer to the endowment of the Spirit on the Messiah (49:3-4 and 62:2).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Schnabel, *Law*, 109-110, for evidence for an implicit identification between wisdom and Torah.

<sup>60</sup> The Spirit also mediates apocalyptic wisdom (14:22), but this cannot be taken as normative because 14:22 is the only reference to the Spirit in *Ezra* and stands in sharp contrast to the numerous references to an *angelus interpretes*.

<sup>61</sup> Schnabel, *Law*, 143-45, 151; J.M. Myers, *I and II Esdras* (AB 42; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 252; cf. B.W. Longenecker, *2 Esdras* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 47-52.

<sup>62</sup> Schnabel provides a more thorough study of the identification of wisdom with Torah (Schnabel, *Law*, 149-51).

created, but few will be saved', and he concludes that (esoteric) wisdom leads to (eschatological) salvation.<sup>63</sup> In his last vision, Ezra asks Yahweh for the Holy Spirit to inspire him in order to reproduce the Torah, because the Torah is life and leads to (eschatological) salvation (14:22). Ezra's prayer is answered in 14:38-41; the drinking of the cup full of fiery water symbolises the reception of the Spirit, which mediates to Ezra divine revelatory wisdom and understanding.<sup>64</sup> Under the Spirit's inspiration Ezra produced ninety-four books (14:42-48), and charismatic exegesis would be expected to be the hermeneutical key to unlock the wisdom of the seventy esoteric books.

Other apocalyptic writings present essentially the same picture. In 2 *Baruch* we also find the figure of the *angelus interpres* (6:5-7:1; 55:3). The identification of wisdom and Torah is made explicit: the Torah is the source of (eternal) life, truth and wisdom (38:1-4; 44:14; 48:24; 51:3; 77:16). The Torah is again depicted as the *ius talionis*; one's eschatological destiny depends on one's present attitude towards the Torah (19:1; 46:3; 48:47; 59:2; 77:3-4). Obedience to the Torah leads to revelatory esoteric wisdom (54:5; cf. 38:1-4; 44:14), which will lead to (eternal) life in the world to come (44:14-15; 51:3). The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*<sup>65</sup> also presents an *angelus interpres* (*T.Reu.* 3:8; *T.Lev.* 2:6 ff.; *T.Jud.* 15:5; *T.Iss.* 2:1; *T.Jos.* 6:6). The Torah is the source of wisdom, righteousness and truth, and people are exhorted to observe the Torah and to acquire wisdom from it because this leads to enlightenment, blessing, assurance of Yahweh's presence and love, peace and salvation (*T.Reu.* 3:8; *T.Lev.* 13:1-9; *T.Zeb.* 5:1-2; *T.Dan.* 5:1-3; 6:10; *T.Nap.* 8:10; *T.Ash.* 6:1-6;

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Stone, who sees in Ezra's request for 'a seed of heart and cultivation of understanding' a reference to eternal life, and, in connection with 6:26, an allusion to the idea of a new creation in Ezk. 11:19; 36:26 (M.E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990], 123-24).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Stone, *Ezra*, 119-20, 438-39; Myers, *Esdras*, 329; R.J. Coggins and M.A. Knibb, *The First and Second Books of Esdras* (Cambridge: CUP, 1979), 281.

<sup>65</sup> Menzies excludes from his study the whole of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* because they reflect a high degree of Christian influence (R.P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* [JPTS 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994], 63). Others, however, argue for a very limited number of possible Christian redactions (H.C. Kee, 'Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs', in Charlesworth [ed.], *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:777; M.M.B. Turner, *Power From On High: The Spirit of Prophecy as the Power of Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* [JPTS 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996], 84-85 n. 7). In the light of this, we regard the Spirit-passages *T.Lev.* 18:7, 11-12; *T.Ben.* 9:3; *T.Jud.* 24:2-3 as possible Christian interpolations, which will be excluded from our investigation.



*T.Jos.* 11:1; *T.Ben.* 10:5, 11). The Torah functions also as the *ius talionis* (*T.Lev.* 19:2; *T.Ash.* 6:3-5). The Spirit has a positive ethical influence on people (*T.Sim.* 4:4-5; *T.Jud.* 20:1-5; *T.Ben.* 8:3), and conveys wisdom (*T.Lev.* 2:3) and truth (*T.Jud.* 20:1-5).

#### 4. The Qumranian Wisdom Tradition<sup>66</sup>

The fourth and final strand of wisdom tradition is found in the writings of the Qumran community. It is very difficult to classify this wisdom tradition because its wisdom is closely associated with the Spirit, the Torah and with apocalyptic wisdom.<sup>67</sup> Wisdom is associated with the Torah in that the Torah is the source of wisdom, and obedience to the Torah leads to wisdom (1QS 9:17; 4Q504 f1 2:13-15; 1Q22 2:8-9; CD 6:2-5; 1QM 10:9-11; 1QH 12:9-11). Study and observance of the Torah leads to right ethical conduct (1QS 1:2-3) and to eternal life (CD 3:15-16, 20; 7:4-6; 19:1-2; 1Q22 2:1-5; 1QH 4:13). This concept of wisdom as the source of salvation, including its relationship with Torah, is probably best summed up in respectively 4Q525 f2 2:3-7 and 4Q185 2:10-13, which are an exhortation to adhere to personified Wisdom and Torah:

Blessed is the man who attains Wisdom, and walks in the law of the Most High, and dedicates his heart to her ways ... For he always thinks of her, and in his distress he meditates on [the law,] [and throughout] his [whole] life [he thinks] of her, [and places her] in front of his eyes in order not to walk on paths [of evil].

[God has given her] to Israel, and like a good gift, gives her. He has saved all his people ... Whoever glories in her will say: he shall take possession of her and she will find him ... With her there are long days ... Her youth [increases] favours and salvation.

This wisdom of the Qumran community is the revelatory knowledge of the hidden meaning of the Torah and the result of divine revelation (1QS 11:15, 18; 1QH 9:21; 15:26-27). Moreover, wisdom is the exclusive possession of the community (1QS 5:11-12; 11:5-6; CD 3:12-16), and teaching communicates this divine revelatory wisdom (1QS 3:13-14; 4:22). The Teacher of Righteousness *par excellence*

<sup>66</sup> The references to Qumran literature are taken from F.G. Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

<sup>67</sup> Although it could be argued that the Qumran community is merely a different sociological group with a similar concept of wisdom as the Torah-centred wisdom tradition, we would like to maintain that the Qumran literature presents a distinct wisdom theology, in that it contains a partly realised eschatology and a strong emphasis on the Spirit (see also A.S. van der Woude, 'Wisdom at Qumran', in J. Day, R.P. Gordon and H.G.M. Williamson [ed.], *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J.A. Emerton* [Cambridge: CUP, 1995], 255-56).

received revelatory wisdom from God and passed it on to the community (1QpHab 2:2-3; 7:4-5; 1QH 10:8-18; 12:27-29; CD 1:10-12). In fact, this revelatory (esoteric) wisdom is mediated by the Spirit (1QH 6:12-13, 25; 8:14-15; 20:11-13; 1QS 4:3-4).<sup>68</sup> Entrance into the community coincides with the reception of the Spirit, who cleanses the person and mediates revelatory knowledge, which is the means to salvation (1QS 3:6-9; 4:20-26; 1QH 6:12-13). However, the Spirit also sustains the sectarian by leading the person in 'the way of truth' towards sanctification and perfection (1QH 6:12-13, 25-27; 7:6-7; 8:15-20; 15:6-7; 17:32-33; 20:11-13).<sup>69</sup> In sum, the Spirit mediates esoteric wisdom to the community through revelation in order to reveal the true meaning of the Torah, i.e. in order to disclose the wisdom hidden in the Torah. Moreover, also in the Qumran community charismatic exegesis—the Spirit-inspired interpretation of the true meaning of the Torah—is the hermeneutical key to reveal this saving wisdom. Consequently, charismatic exegesis, based on the illumination of the Spirit, is then the means to salvation.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, salvation within the Qumran community is, as in the Torah-centred wisdom tradition, also based on human effort: one needs to study and observe the Torah (1QS 5:7-10), and to observe the disciplines of the community (1QS 5-7).

#### IV. Conclusion

In the ITP we have distinguished four strands or varieties of wisdom tradition, which are essentially rooted in and a continuation of the three OT wisdom strands. In the Torah-centred wisdom tradition, mainly represented in the Palestinian and rabbinic literature, Wisdom is identified with the Torah in that the Torah is the locus /source/embodiment of Wisdom. Study and observance of the Torah leads to Wisdom, which in turn leads to right ethical conduct and

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<sup>68</sup> Some have argued that the Qumran scrolls reflect two different pneumatologies: that of 1QS and that of 1QH (Menzies, *Witness*, 72-76; R.W. Kvalvaag, 'The Spirit in Human Beings in Some Qumran Non-biblical Texts', in F.H. Cryer and T.L. Thompson [ed.], *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments* [JSOTS 290; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998], 159-80). Others, however, argue that the pneumatologies of 1QS and 1QH are more coherent (W. Foerster, 'Der Heilige Geist im Spätjudentum', *NTS* 8 [1961-62] 128-31; Turner, *Power*, 128-29).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Breck, *Spirit*, 136-37.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Fishbane, *Garments*, 74.

‘salvation’ (blessing, long life).<sup>71</sup> In this strand there is no place for the divine Spirit (with the exception of one certain occurrence in Sirach). The Spirit-centred wisdom tradition is found in Diaspora Judaism, and the locus of wisdom is Wisdom and her teaching. Following and receiving Wisdom leads to blessing, right ethical conduct and ‘salvation’ (immortality). In fact, salvation and damnation are dependent on one’s attitude towards Wisdom and her teaching. However, the ultimate goal of one’s sapiential journey is not Wisdom but God, i.e. to be in union with God and to have a relationship with him, which is achieved or mediated through union with Wisdom. Wisdom is empowered by and endowed with the Spirit, i.e. the Spirit functions as the power of Wisdom by disclosing the wisdom present in Wisdom’s teaching.<sup>72</sup> The Apocalyptic wisdom tradition is found in Palestinian Judaism, and the Scriptures/Torah is the locus of wisdom. Observance of the Torah leads to esoteric wisdom, which in turn leads to right ethical conduct and (eschatological) ‘salvation’. The function of the *angelus interpretes* is to unlock the meaning of the apocalyptic vision to the seer by mediating apocalyptic wisdom.<sup>73</sup> The fourth wisdom strand in the ITP is the Qumranian wisdom tradition, and although this is the only strand which does not have an immediate predecessor in the OT, the wisdom teaching at Qumran probably has combined elements of all the three wisdom strands in the OT. The Torah is the locus of wisdom, and study of and obedience to the Torah leads to wisdom and to (eschatological) ‘salvation’. Wisdom is the revelatory knowledge of the hidden meaning of the Torah and is mediated by the Spirit. In all the four strands of the intertestamental wisdom tradition, charismatic exegesis is the hermeneutical key to unlock the wisdom contained in a sacred text or vision. Moreover, in general *W/wisdom is a soteriological category*, in that Wisdom is the source of ‘salvation’, and her wisdom has a moral dimension with soteriological consequences. The following table shows the main similarities and

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<sup>71</sup> ‘Salvation’ has different connotations in the wisdom literature: from a long and blessed life in the here and now in Sir. to immortality in Wis. and Philo.

<sup>72</sup> Menzies concludes about the Diaspora literature that ‘Sapiential achievement at a more fundamental level is attained through the study (unaided by the Spirit) of the Torah’ (Menzies, *Witness*, 62). However, we seem to have discovered a different concept.

<sup>73</sup> Although the Spirit never totally disappears from the apocalyptic scene—the Spirit is sporadically mentioned as mediating charismatic wisdom (once in 1 En., once in 4 Ezr., never in 2 Ba. and a few times in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*)—its role seems to be marginalised and subordinated to that of the *angelus interpretes*.

distinctions between the various wisdom traditions.<sup>74</sup> The development of these wisdom traditions can be best visualised in the diagram at the end.<sup>75</sup>

Strand of tradition	Locus of W/wisdom	mediator of W/wisdom	categorisation of W/wisdom	requirements for achieving W/wisdom	hermeneutical key to acquire W/wisdom	final aim of quest for W/wisdom
Torah-centred wisdom	Torah	Yahweh	nomistic	divine grace+human works	charismatic exegesis	blessing, long +righteous life
Spirit-centred wisdom	Wisdom's teaching*	Spirit	pneumatic	divine grace	charismatic exegesis	immortality /union with God
Apocalyptic wisdom	Torah	<i>angelus interpretes</i>	apocalyptic	asceticism (fasting, prayer)	charismatic exegesis	(eschatological) 'salvation'
Qumranian wisdom	Torah	Spirit	nomistic + apocalyptic	divine grace + human works	charismatic exegesis	(eschatological) 'salvation'

\*in Philo loci of wisdom are Torah, creation, philosophy

Van Imschoot, who essentially argued for one homogeneous strand of wisdom, does not allow sufficiently for the differences between the various strands of wisdom literature, whereas we seem to see distinct varieties within the one wisdom tradition.<sup>76</sup> This does not mean of course that there were no possible points of contact or overlap between these various wisdom strands.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, I do believe that neither the OT nor the ITP presents one homogeneous wisdom tradition, but rather that *the OT and ITP present the one wisdom tradition as a single rope made up of various intertwined, distinct threads of wisdom strands*. What are the implications of our brief study for NT studies? First, one can quickly identify the strand of

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Johnson's categorisation of her investigation of intertestamental apocalyptic and wisdom traditions (E.E. Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11* [Ann Arbor: UMI, 1987], 153).

<sup>75</sup> The lines in the diagram are lines of influence from left to right, except for the dynastic monarchy and the classical prophet and the inspired sage where there is mutual influence. The Messianic tradition fell outside the scope of this article (indicated by dotted lines).

<sup>76</sup> Van Imschoot's evidence for his theory comes from a wide range of sapiential literature—Jb., Pr., Ec., Sir., Ba., Wis., 4 Mac.—but he neglects the different emphases of these writings (e.g. Van Imschoot, 'Sagesse', 43-44).

<sup>77</sup> All strands acknowledge, e.g. that W/wisdom comes from God, and although in the Spirit-centred wisdom tradition Wisdom's teaching is the locus of wisdom, Wisdom's commands are basically God's commands [as expressed also in Torah]. And even the Apocalyptic wisdom tradition knows the personification of Wisdom (1 En. 42:1-3; 91:10; 4 Ezr. 5:9b-10).

wisdom tradition to which a particular wisdom writing belongs, and subsequently read this piece of literature in the light of our classification. Hence, our categorisation can function as an initial hermeneutic framework to determine the sapiential milieu of a specific document. Second, we believe that it may now be possible to define more accurately a potential wisdom background to a particular NT document. Rather than proposing that a NT document has possibly been influenced by Jewish wisdom in general, one could now narrow down its sapiential influence more precisely to a particular wisdom strand, so that the NT writing can be elucidated more adequately against a sharper defined background. For instance, in their possible portrayal of Jesus as Wisdom incarnate, Matthew, with an emphasis on the Law, might have been more influenced by Torah-centred wisdom tradition, whereas John with his emphasis on the Spirit (in relation to Jesus) may reflect more of a possible influence of the Spirit-centred wisdom tradition.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> To give an example in regard to Paul: Davis' conclusion that 1 Cor. 1:18-3:20 should be interpreted as 'a response to the principal features of sapiential Judaism' (Davis, *Wisdom*, 144), may be too simplistic; the principal features of *which strand* of sapiential Judaism does he refer to?

