Sin and Evil in the Letter of James in Light of Oumran Discoveries

BENJAMIN WOLD

School of Religion, Arts Building, Room 5031, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland. Email: woldb@tcd.ie

The human capacity to sin and the location of evil are considered in James in light of ongoing research within the field of Qumran studies. This essay consists of two main parts. First, the association of 'desire' in Jas 1.14-15 with the Jewish concept of *yēṣer* is revisited by drawing upon occurrences of *yēṣer* from Cave 4 that had previously not been included in the assessment of James. Parallels from, especially, 4QInstruction provide new data suggesting that sapiential tradition may also reflect the apocalyptic view that human evil is provoked by spiritual beings, vis-à-vis an evil *yēṣer*, which opens up a more nuanced understanding of the self and how 'desire' may operate in Jas 1.14-15. Second, after arguing that the human capacity to sin cannot be relegated merely to a negative anthropology, the larger issue of evil beings (i.e. devil, demons) within James' cosmology is considered. In conclusion, James' sapiential discourse is seen to be located within a cosmological framework which includes active evil agents who lead human beings astray and cause suffering and death. Human responses to evil in James include petitioning God and asking for wisdom from above.

Keywords: 4QInstruction, James, evil, sin, inclination, yetzer/*yēṣer*, wisdom, apocalyptic, devil, demons

The human capacity to 'sin' is expressed in early Jewish and Christian literature in different ways: (1) as inherent to humanity, (2) as deriving from outside of them, and (3) often times as a combination of both. This study is concerned with asking how the author of James understands the roots of 'sin' and how this leads him to recommend responses to 'evil'. The articulation of the origin of evil as 'external' and/or 'internal' also relates to questions about boundaries between 'wisdom' and 'apocalyptic'. Although James writes in the sapiential

- 1 The delineation of internal/external in early Jewish literature, with marginal reference to 4QInstruction, is treated by M. T. Brand, Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature (JAJSup 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).
- 78 2 For convenience, I refer to the author as 'James'.

tradition in which evil is an internal human tendency, he also reflects the apocalyptic view in which human evil is provoked by evil spiritual beings.³ In the last decades it has become almost a cliché to speak about 'conflicted boundaries' between wisdom and apocalyptic.4 However, studies related to apocalyptic influences on James do not yet reflect the reconfiguration of categories that have taken place in early Jewish studies. The cosmology of James, one which includes belief in the existence of the devil and demons, has been seen as only rhetorical. According to this view, James acknowledges external evil but this is ultimately a pragmatic mechanism to motivate his audience to live rightly.⁵ New evidence, especially from 40Instruction (1026; 40415-18; 40423), is particularly informative because it combines admonitions about how to live in this world with an explicit apocalyptic cosmology (4Q416 1). Paradigm shifts in the study of early Jewish wisdom literature mean that James is poised to be reconsidered in light of 4QInstruction. While the main focus here is the significance of Qumran discoveries for the study of James, a clear distinction between the Scrolls and Hellenistic Jewish texts is not intended.⁷

Within James are several curious characteristics that break with so-called 'conventional' wisdom, which is often defined by sapiential compositions of the Hebrew Bible. One of the most striking features of James' paraenesis is the nature of wisdom as revealed (1.5) and given by God from above (3.15), which

- 3 Sapiential compositions generally understand evil in relationship to the human capacity to sin, whereas in apocalyptic evil relates to external actors. Wisdom literature in the HB is often optimistic about the human capacity to make the right ethical choices; however, on occasion there is reference to the wickedness in the heart of man (e.g. Ps 51.10); cf. Qohelet's bleak view of humanity. On apocalyptic, see J. J. Collins, 'The Origin of Evil in Apocalyptic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls', Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic Roman-Judaism (JSJSup 54; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 287-99.
- 4 The SBL section on 'Wisdom and Apocalyptic' has especially advanced this topic in the last decade. Cf. B. G. Wright and L. M. Wills, eds., Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism (Atlanta: SBL, 2005).
- 5 See most recently O. Wischmeyer, 'Zwischen Gut und Böse: Teufel, Dämonen, das Böse und der Kosmos im Jakobusbrief', Evil, the Devil, and Demons: Dualistic Characteristics in the Religion of Israel, Ancient Judaism, and Christianity (ed. J. Dochhorn, S. Rudnig-Zelt and B. Wold; WUNT II/412; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016) 153-68.
- 6 For more recent treatments of apocalyptic and James, sans ref. to 4QInstruction, see M. K. Kovalishyn, 'James and Apocalyptic Wisdom', Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought (ed. B. Reynolds and L. T. Stuckenbruck; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017) 389-406; P. J. Hartin, "Who is wise and understanding among you?" (James 3:13): An Analysis of Wisdom, Eschatology, and Apocalypticism in the Letter of James', Conflicted Boundaries, 149-68.
- 7 4QInstruction's negative view of flesh, use of bridging concepts similar to divine logos, and universal outlook, may in fact suggest that this composition is much more Hellenistic than previously recognised; see B. Wold, 4QInstruction: Divisions and Hierarchies (STDJ 123; Leiden: Brill, 2018), esp. 171, 192-5.

is a feature that indicates an apocalyptic transcendence by deriving understanding from the heavenly realm as opposed to the earthly. James' teaching about wisdom has an eschatological aspect: the consequences for wise and ethical behaviour are not only found in the here and now, but also reward and punishment are future. 4QInstruction shares a number of notable commonalities with James, including both revealed wisdom and eschatology. The eschatological dimension to James' teachings (esp. Jas 1.12, 21; 2.5; 5.3, 8-9, 20) has received attention from several scholars, most notably Todd Penner.⁸ Darian Lockett has offered a study specifically of James and 4QInstruction, which takes eschatology as the point of departure.9 This study approaches the reassessment of early Christian wisdom in light of early Jewish studies by exploring, in a more limited scope, notions of evil within the cosmologies of 4QInstruction and James. 10 In the first section, I seek to establish that 'evil' and the human capacity to sin cannot be relegated solely to a negative anthropology; reified evil actively operates within the interior of the human being. In light of this, in the second section, demonic beings in James are considered as an external threat to people. By setting these demonic figures alongside compositions discovered at Qumran we are better able to determine how James offers instruction about responding to evil and the temptation to sin.

1. 'Desire' and 'Evil Inclination' in Jas 1.13-15

The human capacity to sin is the subject of Jas 1.13-15. Within scholarship on this composition is a wider tendency to infer that the author has a pessimistic anthropology and that humans by nature are inclined to do evil. 11 This is often adduced from Jas 2.4 where 'thought' is described as evil (διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν); the tongue is described as a 'restless evil' full of deadly poison (3.8); and human boasting is referred to as evil (4.16). Moreover, in Jas 1.13-15 human nature includes 'desire' (ἐπιθυμία), which is connected to evil and leads to death:

No one, when tempted, should say, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. But one is tempted by one's own desire (ἐπιθυμία), being lured (ἐξελκόμενος) and enticed (δελαζόμενος) by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.

- 8 T. Penner, The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-Reading an Ancient Christian Letter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).
- 9 D. Lockett, 'The Spectrum of Wisdom and Eschatology in the Epistle of James and 4QInstruction', TB 56 (2005) 131-48.
- 10 D. C. Allison, James: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary (London: T&T Clark, 2013) does not mention 4QInstruction by name but makes a few marginal citations to individual manuscripts.
- 11 M. Dibelius, A Commentary on the Epistle of James (trans. M. A. Williams; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 123; R. P. Martin, James (WBC 48; Waco: Word Books, 1988) 31.

These verses have significant implications for James' anthropology and yet, because the way in which ἐπιθυμία is realised is not made explicit, competing interpretations abound.12

1.1 Joel Marcus on Yēser and James' ἐπιθυμία

'Desire' in Jas 1.14-15 has been set within broader discussions about the *yēser*, or 'inclination', of ancient Judaism. Joel Marcus' study on the identification of ἐπιθυμία with the Jewish notion of יצר הרע ('the evil inclination') has attracted considerable attention and is often cited as the definitive work on this subject. 13 Marcus concludes that on two specific occasions James refers to 'the evil inclination', namely Jas 1.14-15 and 4.5. However, it should be noted that James never explicitly qualifies a human being's own 'desire' as 'evil'. Marcus' identification of 'desire' with 'yeser' is made especially in reference to Sir 15.11-20. He concludes that Jas 1.14-15 is similar to Sirach in that a 'human being's own evil desire' is the source of evil. 14 Sirach translates the Hebrew יצר of Ben Sira 15.14 as καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ἐν χειρὶ διαβουλίου αὐτοῦ ('and He placed humanity into the hand of their own counsel'). Hebrew Ben Sira, which Marcus does not discuss, is returned to further below. Greek Sirach does not consistently translate יצר as διαβουλίον ('counsel'); when יצר occurs in 21.11 it is rendered ἐννοήματος ('concept') and 27.6 has ἐνθυμήματος καρδίας ἀνθρώπου ('thoughts of the heart of man'). Marcus observes that when the Septuagint translates the Hebrew יצר Greek term ἐπιθυμία is never used. To strengthen the link between יצר and ἐπιθυμία he draws upon the writings of Philo of Alexandria vis-à-vis the research of Harry Wolfson. However, the case that Philo uses ἐπιθυμία to represent יצר is weak, even if Marcus' overview of the use of ἐπιθυμία in Philo's writings is otherwise insightful. 15 It should also be noted when drawing inferences from Philo and Ben Sira that both reject the notion that the source of evil is external to a human

- 12 On James' anthropology, see M. Klein, 'Ein vollkommenes Werk', Vollkommenheit, Gesetz und Gericht als theologische Themen des Jakobusbriefes (BWANT 139; Stuttgart/Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1995) 15-32; W. T. Wilson, 'Sin as Sex and Sex with Sin: The Anthropology of James 1:12-15', HTR 94 (2002) 147-68, who studies 'desire' as a seductive feminine power; N. Ellis, The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing: Cosmic Trials and Biblical Interpretation in the Epistle of James and Other Jewish Literature (WUNT II/396; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015) 164-84.
- 13 J. Marcus, 'The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James', CBQ 44 (1982) 606-21. S. McKnight, The Letter of James (NIC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 119 n. 261 comments that the 'singular study' on *yēser* in James is that of Marcus.
- 14 Marcus, 'Evil Inclination', 608.
- 15 H. A. Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (2 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947) II.288-90 connects Philo's use of the verb φαντασιόω (Praem. 63) with ἐπιθυμία, commenting that the noun φαντασία is a good rendering for יצר and the same component within the soul is used elsewhere to represent the earthlike soul which is the seat of ἐπιθυμία.

being, most likely because their philosophically educated Greco-Roman audience was sceptical about the existence of such demonic powers.¹⁶

1.2 Recent Assessments of Early Jewish Yeser

Marcus treats some of the literature from Qumran, namely the Hodayot, Rule of the Community and Damascus Document. Several instances of יצר in Scrolls from Cave 4, not available to Marcus in the 1980s, may be brought to bear on the study of yeser in James. The Qumran Scrolls are our earliest witness to *yeser* and these materials are still in the process of changing how we map the history of this idea. When Marcus concludes by identifying 'desire' with an 'evil inclination' he states that '[t]here are no specific references to a good inclination' and that it may not be accidental that the concept of the good inclination is absent.¹⁷ The way in which Marcus contextualises his conclusion about *yēser* can no longer be supported. Late rabbinic concepts of yeser assume that there is a good *yēser* and an evil *yēser* in every person; scholarship on James generally accepts that this rabbinic notion was in operation when the letter was composed. 18 However, studies by Ishay Rosen-Zvi demonstrate that *yeser* does not operate within a binary model in early Judaism and that this is a much later development.¹⁹ Rosen-Zvi gives significant attention to discoveries from Qumran, as well as other early Jewish literature, and concludes that a monistic model of an evil inclination was dominant at this time.²⁰ Matthias Konradt and Christoph Burchard are critical of the application of the rabbinic notion of *yeser ra* to James, having noted the nonduality of yeser in the Scrolls, and suggest that ἐπιθυμία is best read within the context of Greek-speaking ('Hellenistic') Judaism.21

In the Jewish literature of this era there is no undisputed occurrence of יצר רע outside of previously unknown documents discovered at Qumran. Noteworthy is

- 16 H. Frankemölle suggests parallels between the anthropologies of Sirach and James; see his 'Gespalten oder ganz: Zur Pragmatik der theologischen Anthropologie des Jakobusbriefes', Kommunikation und Solidarität (ed. H.-U. von Brachel and N. Mette; Münster: Liberación, 1985) 160-78; idem, 'Zum Thema des Jakobusbriefes im Kontext der Rezeption von Sir 2,1-18 und 15,11-20', Biblische Notizen 48 (1989) 21-49.
- 17 Marcus, 'Evil Inclination', 621, where he further comments that 'it may have something to do with James' unwillingness to ascribe to human beings an inherent inclination to good'.
- 18 A prevalent assumption in studies on Jas 1.14-15 is that there is a 'good' and 'evil' yēser; cf. McKnight, James, 118-19; Klein, 'Ein vollkommenes Werk', 116.
- 19 I. Rosen-Zvi, 'Two Rabbinic Inclinations? Rethinking a Scholarly Dogma', JSJ 39 (2008) 1-27; idem, Demonic Desires: 'Yetzer Hara' and the Problem of Evil in Late Antiquity (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2011).
- 20 Rosen-Zvi, 'Two Rabbinic Inclinations?', 27. Cf. E. J. C. Tigchelaar, 'The Evil Inclination in the Dead Sea Scrolls, with a Re-Edition of 4Q468i (4QSectarian Text?)', Empsychoi Logoi: Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Pieter Willem van der Horst (ed. A. Houtman, A. de Jong and M. Misset-van de Weg; AJEC 73; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 347-57, at 347.
- 21 M. Konradt, Christliche Existenz nach dem Jakobusbrief (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 85-92; C. Burchard, Der Jakobusbrief (HNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 72-3.

that the definite article is never used as found in Rabbinic traditions (i.e. יצר הרע). The Scrolls are the only place before Rabbinic literature where the Hebrew term יצר qualified by רע occurs and it is consistently indefinite.²² Among Dead Sea discoveries the set phrase יצר רע is found on four occasions, in: the Plea for Deliverance (11Q5 XIX, 15-16); 4QInstruction (4Q417 1 II, 12); Barkhi Nafshi (4Q436 1 I, 10); and the so-called '4QSectarian Text' (4Q422 I, 12). Before the publication of these materials studies on יצר in Oumran discoveries focused mainly on the Hodayot.²³ Not including overlaps and parallels, there are seventy occurrences of the noun in the Scrolls and more than half are found in the hymns.²⁴ While there is no reference to a good *yēser* (i.e. יצר טוב) in the Scrolls, there is a vēser with positive connotations, this is the יצר סמוך ('firm inclination'). However, this $y\bar{e}ser$ is not expressed within the binary model of the rabbis.²⁵ Except for the 'firm inclination' the remaining occurrences of יצר that are qualified are negatively qualified.

In early Qumran scholarship that had focused on Cave 1 materials the use of the *yēser* was understood as reflecting (1) part of each person's human nature, or (2) elements of a dualistic cosmology. The occurrences of *yeser* in the Hodayot and Rule of the Community seem to solve an elementary flaw in the design of the cosmos, but is not a structure that determines the fate of human beings. In the Treatise on the Two Spirits (1QS III, 13-IV, 26) the 'firm inclination' (IV, 5) solves a basic problem of deficiency within a righteous member of the community (i.e. a 'son of light'). The Rule of the Community uses yeser to discuss the interior of an individual: in 1QS v, 5-6 one errs by following after his own 'heart', 'eyes' and 'the thought of his $y\bar{e}ser'$ (מחשבת יצרו)²⁶ and is therefore exhorted to circumcise the 'yēser's foreskin' (עורלת יצר). In the Hodayot the yēser is about both anthropology and the opponents of the poet (1QH^a II, 16-17): the *yeser* entices people to sin, it is part of human nature, and it is also used to define the struggle between good and evil to identify social groups.²⁷

- 22 Jub 35.9, preserved in 1Q18 (1QJubb) 1-2 3 ('for you k[no]w the *yēser* of Esau which is [evil from his youth]') and 4Q223-4 (4QJubh) 2 ו, 49, uses יצר similar to the HB; see H. Lichtenberger, 'Zu Vorkommen und Bedeutung von יצר im Jubiläenbuch', JSJ 14 (1983) 1-10.
- 23 For example, R. E. Murphy, 'Yeser in the Qumran Literature', Bib 39 (1958) 334-44 really only discusses the Hodayot.
- 24 Tigchelaar, 'The Evil Inclination', 348.
- 25 Marcus, 'Evil Inclination', 607 n. 3 errs when he says that יצר סמוך in the Qumran literature is a synonym for the rabbinic notion of 'the good inclination'.
- 26 This expression reflects the description of the human heart in Gen 6.5 and 8.21; cf. 4O370 (4QAdmonition Based on the Flood) 1 1, 3 ('and the Lord judged according to [al]l their ways and the thoughts of the inclinations of their hearts') and 4Q422 (4QParaphrase of Genesis and Exodus) 1, 12.
- 27 In the hymns the terms occur as: יצר חמר ('vessel of clay', 1QHa ווו, 29; וג, 23; xı, 24-5; xıı, 30; xıx 6; xx, 29; xx, 35; xxi, 11; xxi, 38; xxii, 12; xxiii, 13; xxiii, 28; xxv, 31-2); יצר עפר ('vessel of dust', 1QHa viii, 18; xxi, 17: xxi, 25; xxi, 34; xxiii, 28); יצר אשמה ('guilty creature'; 1QHa xiv, 35); יצר עולה ('vessel

The negative uses of *yeser* in the Rule of the Community and Hodayot relate in one way or another to the activities of Belial.²⁸ Occurrences of יצר in several of the Scrolls not discussed by Marcus take this a step further when they convey that yeser has demonic connotations; indeed, in the Plea for Deliverance (11QPsa xix, 15-16) the yeser appears to move from within the human being to an outward force. The Plea for Deliverance has attracted considerable attention because יצר רע occurs in a context alongside 'satan' and an 'unclean spirit', and could be interpreted as personified external evil.²⁹ The Plea for Deliverance is structured on Psalm 51 and at lines 15-16 alludes to Ps 119.133 - 'let not iniquity rule over me' (וְאַל־הַּשְׁלְט־בִּי כַּל־אָוַן) – replacing 'iniquity' (און) with both 'satan' (שטן) and 'unclean spirit' (רוח טמאה). The Plea for Deliverance (11QPsa xix, 15-16a) thus reads: אל תשלט בי שטן ורוח טמאה מכאוב ויצר רע אל ירשו בעצמי ('let not a satan rule over me, or an unclean spirit, let not pain or an evil inclination rule over my bones').

In the Plea for Deliverance the coupling of 'satan' and 'unclean spirit' in parallel with יצר רע makes clear that these are not a state of mind, but rather outward forces and demonic in nature.³¹ Such personification is part of a broader development demonising sin, perhaps similar to Barkhi Nafshi (4Q436 ו ו-וו) where יצר רע is rebuked. On the one hand the reference in Barkhi Nafshi may be describing the warding off of a demonic being or evil spirit.³² On the other hand it is described along with negative tendencies (e.g. stiff neck, haughty eyes) and may simply be a

of iniquity', 1QHa xxi, 30); יצר נחעב ('abhorrent vessel', 1QHa xxiii, 37; xxiii, 38); יצר הוה ('destructive intention', 1QHa xv, 6-7); יצר רמיה ('deceitful inclination', 1QHa xxi, 29).

²⁸ Rosen-Zvi, 'Two Rabbinic Inclinations', 17.

²⁹ Esp. F. García Martínez, E. J. C. Tigchelaar and A. S. van der Woude, Qumran Cave 11. II: 11Q2-8, 11Q20-31 (DJD 23; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); P. Alexander, 'The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls', The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment (2 vols.; ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 1999) II.331-53; A. Lange, 'Considerations Concerning the "Spirits of Impurity" in Zech 13:2', Die Dämonen - Demons (ed. H. Lichtenberger, A. Lange and K. F. Diethard Römhelf; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 254-68, at 261; L. T. Stuckenbruck, 'Prayers of Deliverance from the Demonic in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature', The Changing Face of Judaism, Christianity, and Other Greco-Roman Religions in Antiquity (ed. I. H. Henderson, G. S. Oegema, J. H. Charlesworth and S. Parks Ricker; JSHRZ-St. 2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2006) 146-65.

³⁰ Cf. Aramaic Levi Document ('let not any satan have power over me, to make me stray from your path ... and let the shelter of your power shelter me from evil'). ALD probably dates to the late third or early second century BCE; see M. E. Stone and J. C. Greenfield, 'The Prayer of Levi', JBL 112 (1993) 247-66.

³¹ שטן is used indeterminatively, cf. $1QH^a$ xxII, 25 ('you will rebuke every destructive satan'); $1QH^a$ xxiv, 19 ('every destructive satan'); 4Q504 1-2 iv, 12-13 ('without a satan or misfortune'); Num 22.22, 32; 1 Kgs 5.18; Job 1.6-12; 2.1-10; Zech 3.1-2; 1 Chr 21.1; Jub 23.29; 46.2; 50.5; 1 En 40.7; 53.3; 56.1; 62.11; 63.1; 65.6.

³² Tigchelaar, 'The Evil Inclination', 352; cf. Zech 3.2 and 1QM xiv, 10.

personification of vices. 33 The study of the personification of evil, whether related to yeser or not, has been the subject of several studies on Qumran demonology.34

In 4QInstruction, excluding overlaps, the noun יצר may occur as many as six times: five times with at least some discernible context (4Q416 1 16; 4Q417 1 I, 9; I, 11; I, 17; 4Q417 1 II, 12) and once without any meaningful context (4Q418 217 1).³⁵ Only one of these uses in 4QInstruction is qualified with 'evil' (4Q417 1 II, 12). In comparison with the Hodayot and Plea for Deliverance occurrences of the term in 4QInstruction have received little attention.³⁶ Rosen-Zvi sees this instance of יצר רע in 4QInstruction as innovative because it is an active misleading agent; indeed this *yeser* is closer to what we find in the Plea for Deliverance, and perhaps Barkhi Nafshi, than the Hodayot. Rosen-Zvi is particularly interested in whether it is reified, concluding that it features 'in a demonological semantic field' even if its precise meaning is rather fluid.37

1.3 4QInstruction and Ben Sira on Yeser

While 4QInstruction has a lively interest in angelic beings, there are no references either to demons or the devil; therefore, if there is a demonic opponent in 4QInstruction it is not explicit. 4Q416 1 preserves the opening column of the document and has the broken line: '[fo]r inclination of the flesh (יצר בשר) is he, and from understand[ing]' (4Q416 1 16; par. 4Q418 2, 2a, 2b, 2c 8). 38 If it is correct to read the noun יצר בשר here rather than the verb יצר (i.e. 'He fashioned flesh'), then the יצר בשר ('fleshly inclination') would seemingly be similar to יצר רע. Daniel Harrington and John Strugnell, the editors of DJD 34, set the context of this column. They describe this passage as speaking 'about God's orderly rule over the cosmos the heavenly hosts and the luminaries (ll. 1-10)', as well as the proper response of all creation to the order of the cosmos.³⁹ Therefore, a negatively qualified

- 33 Rosen-Zvi, Demonic Desires, 47 concludes that the 'context points indeed to yetzer's identification with an evil tendency rather than a demonic being'.
- 34 See esp. Stuckenbruck, 'Prayers of Deliverance'.
- 35 For a treatment of each of these occurrences, see B. Wold, "Flesh" and "Spirit" in Qumran Sapiential Literature as the Background to the Use in Pauline Epistles', ZNW 106 (2015) 262-79.
- 36 Rosen-Zvi, Demonic Desires, 46 comments that this is 'an active agent that can entice people to evil'.
- 37 Rosen-Zvi, Demonic Desires, 48.
- 38 J. Strugnell, D. J. Harrington and T. Elgvin, Qumran Cave 4 xxiv: Sapiential Texts, Part 2: 4QInstruction (Mûsār le Mēvîn): 4Q415ff. with a Re-Edition of 1Q26 (DJD 34; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999) 558 in the concordance reconstruct: '[For] He (i.e. God) [creat]ed a fleshly inclination and the one understand[ing]'; E. J. C. Tigchelaar, To Increase Learning for the Understanding Ones: Reading and Reconstructing the Fragmentary Early Jewish Sapiential Text 4QInstruction (STDJ 44; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 176 translates: '[incl]ination of the flesh is he/it. And from understanding (?).'
- 39 DJD 34.8.

yēṣer, here called 'fleshly' and later described as 'evil', may be part of the cosmological framework that begins this composition.

In $4Q417\,1\,\mathrm{II}$ it appears that יצר רע" may be in synonymous parallel with נבונות בשר ('understandings of the flesh'), both of which lead the addressee astray. Only the first few words of the right-hand side of this column remain and provide little meaningful context for our assessment. In $4Q417\,1\,\mathrm{II}$, 12 is the use of an imperative form of the verb to exhort the addressee to avoid the thought of an evil inclination. Few commentators have offered substantial comment on the יצר רע in line 12.

4Q417 1 II (**par. 4Q418 123 I, 1-2**; *theoretical*), transcription and translation:⁴⁰

- 11 He will punish all your ways [
- do not let the thought of an evil inclination entice you[
- by truth you will seek, do not [let the thought of an evil inclination (?)] entice you⁴¹
 [and do not do anything]
- 14 without his commanding. By understandings of the flesh do not be led as[tray
- 15 you shall consider [] do not say
- 16 thus [

How the *piel* verb from the root פתה is translated has significant impact on our understanding of the עצר רצר. Moreover, the expression 'thought' (מחשבה) in construct with the *yēṣer*, were it to occur without הם, would seemingly locate the inclination within the interior of a human being (cf. 1QS v, 5; 4Q370 1 I, 3; 4Q422 I, 12). For הסד I offer the translation 'enticed' although it could be rendered as 'misled', 'deceived', or even 'seduced'. In 4QInstruction the *piel* verb occurs only here, and in *qal* form is well known as a description for 'being simple' (4Q418 221 2). In *piel* הסד is used in the Qumran literature only twice, in (1)

⁴⁰ Transcription from DJD 34.169; theoretical reconstruction of Hebrew in italics is from E. Qimron, החיבורים העבריים / The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Hebrew Writings (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2010–14) וו.149 (Hebrew). Translation mine.

⁴¹ In DJD 34.170 the editors offer the translation, without transcribing יצר רע, '[...] thou shalt *faithfully* seek. Let not the th[ought of an evil *inclination*] mislead thee[...]' (emphasis original).

4Q184 1 17 ('Wiles of the Wicked Woman'), and (2) the Temple Scroll (11Q19 66 8; par. 4Q524 15 22).⁴² In 4Q184 the seductress, or perhaps demonic figure, 'entices' human beings, and in the Temple Scroll a man 'seduces' a virgin. 43 The language of enticement has strong sexual as well as demonic connotations, which is noteworthy because Jas 1.14-15 uses highly sexualised terms ('conceive', 'give birth') to describe enticement to sin. 44 The activity ascribed to evil inclination in line 12 makes it an alien and independent force. This יצר רע, as an alien threat, refers to active evil whose field of play is the human mind, emotions and perceptions; this is particularly threatening because one can no longer trust one's self. 45 Moreover, reflected in this mechanism is the generation of a more highly attuned sense of interiority. The warning for the righteous not to be led astray further demonstrates concern about falling away, which explains the urgency found throughout 4QInstruction to remain vigilant in seeking revealed wisdom called רז נהיה ('mystery of existence').

4Q417 1 II, 13-14 emphasise keeping God's commandment, which has similarities with Ben Sira 15.14-15 (MS A).46

> ה אלהים מבראשית א ברא אדם וישתיהו ביד חותפו ויתנהו ביד יצרו 14 אם תחפוץ תשמר מצוה ותבונה לעשות רצונו 15

- From the beginning God created man, and he placed him in the hand of one lying in wait, he gave him into the hand of his inclination;
- if you desire, keep the commandment, and (with) understanding do his will.
- 42 Not a frequently used term, it occurs several other times in mostly *pual* forms (e.g. 1QH^a xII, 17; XIV, 22; XXII, 27).
- 43 See for example J. M. Baumgarten, 'On the Nature of the Seductress in 4Q184', RevQ 15 (1991-2) 133-43; M. J. Goff, 'A Seductive Demoness at Qumran? Lilith, Female Demons and 4Q184', Evil, the Devil, and Demons, 59-76.
- 44 Wilson, 'Sin as Sex'; for a comprehensive overview on attitudes in Qumran discoveries, see esp. W. R. G. Loader, The Dead Sea Scrolls on Sexuality: Attitudes towards Sexuality in Sectarian and Related Literature at Qumran (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).
- 45 4Q416 2 III, 13-15 have exhortations to tend to 'your thoughts' (DJD 34.113 suggest 'refine' your thoughts) as part of understanding and seeking the mystery of existence.
- 46 MS B reads: הוא מראש ברא אדם וישיתהו [...] ו אם תחפץ תשמר מצוה ואמונה לעשות רצון אל ('from the beginning he created man and placed him [...] his [...]; if you desire keep the commandment and faithfully do God's will'). P. C. Beentjes, The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of all Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts (SupVT 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 142; translations mine.

Both Ben Sira ('keep the commandment') and 4QInstruction ('do not do anything without his commanding') emphasise commandment/commanding in connection with yeser. In Ben Sira keeping a commandment is qualified with 'if you desire', which sets obedience as a choice to be made according to one's inclination (cf. 15.17 'before man is life and death, whatever he desires (יחפץ) will be given to him'). 4QInstruction does not associate obedience to God's commands with one's thoughts, and certainly not the evil inclination, but rather stringently instructs not to do anything that God has not commanded. Ben Sira (MS A) exhorts one to do God's will in relationship to 'understanding' (תנובה), whereas 4QInstruction warns that 'understandings of the flesh' (תנובות בשר) can mislead. 4QInstruction at these points reflects concern about being misled by thoughts and fleshly understanding, Jas 1.14-15 similarly distrusts $\dot{\varepsilon}\pi\iota\theta\nu\mu\dot{\iota}\alpha$, and both stand in contrast with Ben Sira.⁴⁷ The presence of אובה alongside יצר alongside יצר in both 4QInstruction and Ben Sira may indicate either that one text is reacting to the other or that these are associations more commonly made with yeser in the era and may be formulated according to one's own theological or philosophical perspective.

Like 4QInstruction (4Q417 1 II), Jas 1.14-15 denotes active agency when ἐπιθυμία is described as 'luring' (ἐξελκόμενος) and 'enticing' (δελαζόμενος). Some commentators view these terms as denoting the activity of fishing, in reference to being caught by sin, and point to the use of δελεάζω in Philo (esp. Agr. 103 'for there is no single thing which is not enticed ($\delta \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \alpha \sigma \theta \epsilon \nu$) by the allurements of pleasure ... entangled in its multifarious nets').⁴⁸ So, too, in the Hodayot (1QHa x, 31; XI, 27; XII, 13; XIII, 10) a trapper or fisherman's net is 'spread out' (פרש), which depicts being caught in sin. However, on the only other two occasions in the New Testament when the verb δελεάζω is used (2 Pet 2.14, 18) false teachers 'entice' others to indulge in sinful passions of the flesh. Moreover, the only occurrence of δελεάζω in the Greek versions of early Jewish pseudepigraphical writings is in the Greek Apocalypse of Moses. In 19.1 the activities of the serpent trying to deceive Eve in the Garden of Eden are described as: 'He said these things, wishing in the end to entice (δελεάσαι) and kill me'; and later in 26.3 when the serpent is cursed the reason given is that 'you ensnared (ἐδελέασας) them in your evil'. Therefore, δελεάζω is clearly associated with the activity of evil actors enticing one to sin, and in the

⁴⁷ Nonetheless, Hebrew Ben Sira is tamed by Greek Sirach in that the poetic parallelism of Heb 15.14 omits one stanza; הותף appear to be used synonymously. The verbal form of the root החף means to 'abduct', 'rob', or 'lie in wait' for one's prey; the noun form does not occur in the HB or among DSS.

⁴⁸ P. H. Davids, The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 84.

Greek Apocalypse of Moses this is even to death (cf. Jas 1.14–15).⁴⁹ In the New Testament ἐξέλκω only occurs here in James and rarely elsewhere; in LXX Gen 37.28 Joseph is 'pulled out' (ἐξέλκω; cf. MT משך) of the pit and sold to the Egyptians, and in 3 Macc 2.23 Ptolemy is 'dragged out' (ἐξέλκω) of the temple by his bodyguards.

James and 4QInstruction share a combination of an internal aspect of sin – in 4QInstruction this is the 'thought' of an evil inclination and in James 'one's own' desire – with active evil agency. In light of this observation, the 'evil thought' found later in Jas 2.4, which is at times drawn upon to illustrate James' negative anthropology, need not be seen as exclusively belonging to human nature and capacity to sin. The activity ascribed to both 'thought' and 'desire' is alien, the human mind and emotions are within the demonic forces' field of play, which is particularly frightening because one cannot trust one's own judgement. This intensity of internal struggles taking place is illustrated by Jas 4.1, which describes the 'cravings (ἡδονή) at war' within a person. In both 4QInstruction and James the ability to overcome this active and alien force which operates within a person's interior is revealed wisdom (i.e. Jas 1.5; יוֹ וֹ וֹ בְּהִיֹה in 4QInstruction). Wisdom comes from above and outside humanity and enables one to live rightly.

That ἐπιθυμία in Jas 1.15–16 is similar to, or reflective of, the Hebrew use of a negatively qualified τεν is more convincing in light of 4QInstruction. Moreover, the publication of Cave 4 materials in critical editions in the 1990s and subsequent studies on $y\bar{e}ser$ add significantly to our understanding of the growth and evolution of this concept. The later rabbinic notion of two inclinations, one good the other evil, shape Marcus' study, which leads to a misunderstanding about what ἐπιθυμία is and how it functions. The parallel between James (1.14–15) and 4QInstruction (4Q417 1 II) provides a more nuanced understanding of self and appreciation that the human capacity to sin may include the presence of alien evil actively enticing one to $\sin .50$ In light of this, references in James to external evil actors and their relationship to humankind may be reassessed. The human capacity to $\sin .00$ In James does not derive from a monolithic negative anthropology, but rather from a complex perception of invasive and even reified, active evil. $\sin .00$

⁴⁹ In Apoc. Mos. 19.3 the serpent pours the poison of wickedness upon the fruit before Eve gives it to Adam, a fruit which is described as the ἐπιθυμία and 'head' (κεφαλή) of all sin.

⁵⁰ See the discussions about the 'self' by C. A. Newsom, 'Spirit, Flesh, and the Indigenous Psychology of the Hodayot', *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature: Essays in Honor of Eileen Schuller on the Occasion of her 65th Birthday (ed. J. Penner, K. M. Penner and C. Wassen; STDJ 98; Leiden: Brill, 2012) 339-54.*

⁵¹ As demonic temptation, this may also reflect knowledge of the Matthean and Lukan Temptation narrative (see comments on Jas 4.7 below).

2. The Relationship of Humanity to the Devil and Demons

James appears to be indebted to a larger cosmological framework in which other-worldly powers oppose God. The author avoids explicitly detailing parts of his cosmology. For instance, he neither describes the heavenly realm nor mentions angels. However, James is interested in what is above: in 3.15 heavenly wisdom stands in contrast to what is earthly and below. From 1.16-18 we learn that God the father is above in the heavens, which is a place of light where there are no shadows, and from where he gives gifts to his children.⁵² Those below are exhorted not to become stained by this world. As we read in 1.27, 'worship (θρησκεία) that is pure and undefiled before God' is 'to keep oneself unstained by the world' (ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου).

The terms κόσμος and σάρξ describe what is impure and below while 'God' and 'light' describe what is above. This contrast is particularly salient in Jas 4.4, where 'friendship with the world' (φίλος τοῦ κόσμου) is 'enmity with God'. This description anthropomorphises the 'world'; those who are friends with it are God's enemy. What exactly κόσμος is requires teasing out. One possibility is that the personified 'world' is a way to express a power that is in opposition to God. The association of the world with what is 'devilish' (3.15) suggests such a characterisation and is the closest that the author comes to making this explicit: two types of wisdom allocated to different spheres, one above and one below. 'Demonic' here belongs to the earthly realm below, but in light of the previous assessment of 1.14-15 this is not confined to a negative aspect of anthropology.⁵³ When James mentions demons and the devil they are not, as is the case within so much of early Jewish and Christian tradition, esoteric ideas or rhetorical devices.⁵⁴

In Jas 4.7 the author speaks about the devil: 'Submit yourselves to God, resist the devil (διάβολος) and he will flee from you.' There are several forms that the activity of resisting the devil could take. For instance, in Tob 6.17 Tobias confronts a jealous demon in the bridal chamber. Another example is that of battle and combat between righteous humanity and demonic forces (e.g. Eph 6.11; Rev 12.7-8; 20.8-9; cf. 1QM). Along different lines, Dale Allison notes that when reading 4.7 'Christian expositors have sometimes thought of the temptation stories in the Synoptics' (cf. n. 51 above), which I would note is a passage that

- 52 Whereas desire, when it matures, 'gives birth' (ἀποκύει) to sin (Jas 1.15), in 1.18 God has 'brought forth' (ἀπεκύησεν) James and his addressees as a kind of first fruits. Jas 1.18 may use creation terminology for acts of salvation similar to the Hodayot (1QHa XI, 20-4).
- 53 Pace Wischmeyer, 'Teufel', 163, who writes: 'Das Dämonische hat hier auch keinen eigenen irgendwie lokal vorzustellenden Bereich, sondern ist Teil einer Sphäre, und zwar der Sphäre des Irdischen, des Kosmos (4,4), des "Psychischen", das wie dargestellt zu den Aspekten der negativen Anthropologie gehört.'
- 54 Ellis, Divine Testing, 163 comments that '[t]he 'demonic wisdom' appears to be a statement on the origins of wisdom: God provides true wisdom, but demons bring false wisdom. This function aligns with the standard role of demons seen in the Enochic interpretation of Gen 6:1-4.

has been discussed in recent publication in relationship to apotropaisms.⁵⁵ Submitting and drawing near to God is an integral and instrumental part of resisting the devil; how humanity approaches God is mainly conceivable through acts of prayer and worship. Indeed, when prayer is mentioned later in 5.16, in reference to confessing sins in order to be healed (cf. 5.13), James comments that 'the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects'.

In Jas 4.7, the devil is described as an actual being and yet the opposition portrayed in this verse is not between God and the devil, but rather the devil is humanity's opponent. The devil is described as fleeing not from God, but rather from the person who resists him. Humanity in this verse stands between God and the devil. They are part of the fabric of James' cosmological framework in which humanity is located and instructed.⁵⁶ The author's emphasis is not on negotiating cosmological dualism, per se, but instead on addressing pervasive and variegated evil. Rather than describing the conflict between two cosmic powers James is interested in locating humanity between them and offers solutions to a complex problem of evil: revelation (Jas 1.5) provides wisdom from above (3.15) and is key to overcoming evil, and this revealed wisdom is given in response to petition ('if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God').

The example of correct belief in Jas 2.19 is the oneness of God, a clear reference to the Shema' Israel (Deut 6.4-9), and holds further clues about the place of demons within the author's cosmology. The reference to the Shema in the phrase εἶς ἐστιν ὁ θεός ('God is one') is found within a demonological context ('even the demons believe - and shudder') and therefore resonates with the liturgical practices involving phylacteries and *mezuzot* in the period. Esther Eshel, Hanan Eshel and Armin Lange conclude that the inclusion of Deut 6.4 in 4QMezuzot^{b-d} demonstrates that since the first century BCE the Shema was 'understood as a powerful protection for the houses of Jewish families' and that 'already in the late Second Temple period ... mezuzot containing the Shema' Israel were used for apotropaic purposes'. 57 In addition to mezuzot from Qumran, the Nash Papyrus, which contains the Shema, may also have been intended for use as a

⁵⁵ Allison, James, 625. M. Morris, 'Apotropaic Inversion in the Temptation and at Qumran', Evil, the Devil, and Demons, 93-100; M. Henze, 'Psalm 91 in Premodern Interpretation and at Qumran', Biblical Interpretation at Qumran (ed. M. Henze; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 168-93; and E. Koskenniemi, 'The Traditional Roles Inverted: Jesus and the Devil's Attack', BZ 52 (2008) 261-8.

⁵⁶ Allison, James, 625 describes the devil here as a 'wholly evil, demonic figure'.

⁵⁷ E. Eshel, H. Eshel and A. Lange, "Hear, O Israel" in Gold: An Ancient Amulet from Halbturn', JAJ 1 (2010) 43-64, at 48. Cf. A. Lange, 'The Shema Israel in Second Temple Judaism', JAJ 1 (2010) 207-14, at 212-14, who concludes that '[t]he Mezuzot from Qumran are hence the first hint to the idea of the Shema Israel as an apotropaic agent, which is well known from Rabbinic literature (see e.g. y. Pe'ah 15d)'.

Jewish amulet, either as a tefillah or mezuzah.⁵⁸ Furthermore, there are echoes of the Shema in Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs when 'loving the Lord with all one's strength' results in the 'spirit of Beliar' fleeing (T. Iss. 7.6-7).⁵⁹ The response of demons to the Shema in Jas 2.19 is to 'shudder' (φρίσσω); a similar response to the use of phylacteries is observed by Graham Twelftree in the Greek Magical Papyri (IV: 3014-19), which reads: 'Write this phylactery upon a sheet of tin and hang it on the patient. It is for every demon a thing to be trembled (φρίκον) at, as he fears it.'60

Jas 2.19 is not offering instruction in the practice of apotropaic prayer or use of amulets; however, this verse reflects James' cosmology when it discursively alludes to a well-known practice of countering demonic evil. To depict demons as shuddering in response to the declaration of the oneness of God found in the Shema is to evoke an apotropaic practice known to and accepted by the audience, which resonates with Jas 5.14 where the 'name of the Lord' is used when healing the sick.⁶¹ Therefore, in James, drawing near to God in prayer is a practice wherein the devil and demons may be resisted.

Conclusion

4QInstruction reconfigures our understanding of sapiential discourse because it is set within a cosmological framework. In the first section of this study, this paradigm shift within the study of early Jewish wisdom literature is brought to bear on James - if only in an initial way. The suggestion that an 'evil inclination' is in operation in Jas 1.14-15 is well known. Recent developments on the study of yeser are brought into dialogue with earlier assessments. As a result, if James is indeed drawing upon $y\bar{e}ser$ tradition, then: (1) this is not a binary concept wherein an 'evil inclination' has a counterpart in a 'good inclination'; (2) it is indefinite (i.e., not the יצר הרע of rabbinic tradition); and (3) like some discoveries from Qumran *yēser* is operating within a demonological semantic field. The occurrence of an 'evil inclination' in 4QInstruction (4Q417 1 II) is

- 58 On use of phylactery in ancient Judaism, see Y. Harari, 'What is a Magical Text? Methodological Reflections Aimed at Redefining Early Jewish Magic', Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity (ed. S. Shaked; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 91-124; Y. E. Cohn, Tangled up in Text: Teffilin and the Ancient World (BJS 351; Providence: Brown University Press, 2008) 80-6.
- 59 Children keeping the commandments, reflective of teaching one's children the Shema, also results in Beliar fleeing (T. Dan 5.1; T. Naph. 7.4); cf. CD xvi, 4-5: 'And on the day on which one has imposed upon himself to return to the law of Moses, the angel Mastema will turn aside from following him, should he keep his words.'
- 60 G. H. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) 179-80; cf. Ellis, Divine Testing, 162-3.
- 61 Cf. the power of petitionary prayer re sickness in 11Q11 v; 4Q560 cols. I-II; Jub 10.3-6.

considered here to have an important parallel with Jas 1.14-15: both passages share the similarity of expressing alien activity operating within the human interior. 4QInstruction expresses this in relationship to an evil yeser and James to 'desire.'

4QInstruction provides new evidence that in James the human capacity to sin cannot simply be relegated to a negative anthropology, but also belongs to an implicit cosmology. Jas 1.14-15 are central to considerations of sin and evil in the letter and, consequently, the reassessment of yeser in the first section of this article opens up wider questions about the presence of active reified evil and its relationship to human beings. Therefore, in the second section, passages that mention demons and the devil are considered as they relate to and possibly reflect James' cosmology. One way that humans are seen to counter demonic evil is through prayer and petition. Although previous scholarship on Jas 2.19 raised the possibility that an apotropaic reference is present, these earlier studies only pointed to rabbinic literature in support. Recent studies on the use of the Shema Israel discovered at Qumran offer definitive evidence that Deut 6.4-9 had an apotropaic function in the Second Temple era.

The two sections of this study taken together begin to demonstrate that the problem of sin and response to evil in James is multifaceted. It is not only that the letter reflects a negative anthropology, but also that an explanation is offered for it, one which includes evil actors who are at play both within and without. Humanity exists in between a space above and a space below, there are both inner and outer battles taking place within and upon people. As creatures situated within a broader cosmos, humanity struggles in between two opposing sides. James offers two important solutions to these problems: (1) pray to God to reveal wisdom; and (2) petition him in resistance to the devil and demons. True wisdom in James descends into the midst of a conflict taking place inside and outside of the human self.62

⁶² I would like to thank Matthew Goff and Lawrence Wills for inviting me to present a version of this article at the Wisdom and Apocalypticism section, Annual SBL meeting, Atlanta, GA, 2015.