

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)



The conception of the sealing up of Sheol is by no means common. Volz<sup>b</sup> gives no other reference to it than our passage *Apoc. Bar.* xxi. 23. It is a corollary of the doctrine enunciated (apparently as a new message) in the companion apocalypses of *Baruch* and II. *Esdras*, that the "Consummation" (*Daniel*: *συντέλεια τῶν αἰώνων*) is delayed only till the completion of the number who are to be born and die, the "treasuries of souls" being now nearly full.

The conception of the insatiable maw of Sheol is of course not a new one. The Ode is clearly dependent here (as so often) on *Isaiah*. But besides *Isaiah* v. 14 (above cited), *Proverbs* xv. 22, xxvii. 16, 20, and *Habakkuk* ii. 5 should be compared. Sheol and Abaddon ("Hell" and "Destruction") are voracious monsters "hidden" from men, but not from God. Their appetite is insatiable. The new thought is their "sealing up" with "the seal of the Lord." As the Ode begins with a reference to the baptism of Jesus ("The dove fluttered down upon the Messiah because he was her head"), there may be here a point of connexion; for in second-century literature baptism is referred to as "the seal of the Lord." But if there be literary dependence between *Apoc. Bar.* and Ode xxiv., the dependence can only be on the side of the latter. For *Baruch* is introducing the rebuke (i.e. deposition) of the angel of death (cf. *1 Cor.* xv. 26) and the sealing up of Sheol as a message of his own, whereas the *Odist* merely rejoices in the thought as one of the data of his eschatology.

It does not follow that the Odes were necessarily Christian in their original form. The unmistakably Christian elements still appear to lie upon the surface without affecting the substance. The date, however, will be brought well within the Christian period. In fact, up to, if not beyond, the threshold of the second century. Indirectly this will

<sup>b</sup> *Jüdische Eschatologie*, 1903.

reinforce the argument against a Jewish origin; for the Jewish writings of this disastrous period have not the tone of exultant realisation of the promises in mystical fellowship with God which characterises the Odes. Men of Jewish faith in 70-140 A.D. were absorbed either in apocalyptic dreams of judgment reversing the disasters of Zion, or in a growing enslavement to the minutiae of legalism.

Another parallel which I cannot recall having been mentioned is found in two fragments of Hippolytus' commentary on the Song of Solomon. I subjoin Harris' translation of the passage from the *Odes* side by side with Achelis' from Hippolytus:—

*Odes of Solomon* viii. xix.

viii. <sup>14</sup> Love me with affection, ye who love: <sup>15</sup> for I do not turn away my face from them that are mine. . . . <sup>17</sup> I fashioned their members: my own breasts I prepared for them, that they might drink my holy milk and live thereby.

xix. <sup>1</sup> A cup of milk was offered me: and I drank it in the sweetness of the delight of the Lord. <sup>2</sup> The Son is the cup, and he who was milked is the Father: <sup>3</sup> and the Holy Spirit milked Him because His breasts were full, and it was necessary for Him that His milk should be sufficiently released; <sup>4</sup> and the Holy Spirit opened His bosom and mingled the milk from the two breasts of the Father; and gave the mixture to the world without their knowing: <sup>5</sup> and they who receive in its fulness are the ones on the right hand.

Hippolytus on *Song* i. 2, 4.

Frgt. II. As the heart is rejoiced with wine, so do the testaments of Christ give joy. For like as infants suck milk from the breasts, so every one that sucks from the law of the commandments of the gospel obtains eternal food. But the "breasts" of Christ are naught else save the two testaments, and the milk is their commandments. In thy preaching, therefore, suck milk from the breasts, that thou mayst become a perfect disciple.

Frgt. III. . . . Taking up the time of repentance she (the Church) says: "We love thy breasts more than wine." The two testaments we say . . . But the breasts of Christ are the two testaments which give simplicity to those who believe.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>c</sup> *Hippolytus* ed. Bonwetsch-Achelis, p. 344.

I venture to think this parallel from Hippolytus in itself a sufficient justification of Harris' interpretation of xix. 4 f. as referring to the two testaments, as against Harnack's (see EXPOSITOR VIII. 9, September 1911, p. 249 f.). It is indeed quite as easy to apply the implied reference to those on the left hand who do not receive the milk "in its fulness" to Jews who reject the New Testament as to Marcionites who reject the Old. In either case we have relatively late Christian (interpolated) material. Hitherto, so far as I am aware, the earliest date to which this material (referred to by Harris as the "latest" in the *Odes*, and as "at the earliest a product of the second century") could be certainly carried back by external evidence was the beginning of the fourth century, when Lactantius quotes this ode by name and number. If Hippolytus be really employing it the date of Lactantius (c. 311) will be carried back almost a century. But it is far from improbable that the dependence is on the other side. The passage from Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* i. 6) quoted by Harris (p. 115) might be suggested by Ode viii. 17, and the application made by Hippolytus to the two testaments of Scripture might rest on one or both. But Ode xix. 2-5 seems more likely to have been suggested by Hippolytus than conversely. If so, this relatively late addition may be dated c. 250 A.D. BENJ. W. BACON.

### THE DATE OF HEROD'S MARRIAGE WITH HERODIAS AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE GOSPELS.

THE purpose of this article is to draw attention to a problem in criticism and chronology which seems to deserve more attention than it has lately received.

The question is the bearing of the story of Herod, Herodias and John the Baptist, on the one hand on the criticism of