GEN. 1,26 AND 2,7 IN JUDAISM, SAMARITANISM, AND Gnosticism*

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The scope of this paper is to restore an ancient Jewish haggadah on Gen. 1,26 and trace its subsequent development. The tannaite and amoraic interpretations of Gen. 1,26 do not differ from other rabbinical expositions of Scriptural passages in that they show us a body of scholars agreeing with each other in all fundamental respects, but—mainly through the works of J. Neusner and his students—it has become clear that we cannot trust this picture. In order to recover the original form of the haggadah, we should compare the rabbinical evidence with Philonic and Gnostic texts, where the passage plays a very important role. Furthermore, the Samaritan literature must not be left out. It has been known for a long time that the Samaritans are preservers of ancient halakhic traditions once in vogue also among the Jews¹; we shall see in the

¹) Already A. Geiger suggested that the Samaritans, not of pure Israelite stock, at one time had to borrow the doctrines and religious usages current in Jerusalem in order to gain favour with the religious authorities, viz., the Sadducees. Later, when the Pharisees came into power and the Sadducean theology was repressed, according to Geiger, the Samaritans kept to the old ways. The thesis of Geiger was set forth in several works; see, for instance, 'Zur Theologie und Schriftenklärung der Samaritaner', ZDMG 12 (1858), pp. 132 ff. (= Nachgelassene Schriften, ed. by L. Geiger, III (Breslau 1876), pp. 255 ff.). It was repeated in what came to be regarded as the standard work on the Samaritans, viz., J. A. Montgomery, The Samaritans (The Bohlen Lectures for 1906) (Philadelphia 1907, reprinted New York 1968), pp. 46, 72, 186 ff. It has even been suggested that there was a family relationship between the old Zadokite priesthood of Jerusalem and the priests in Shechem. This was asserted mostly on the ground that Josephus, Ant. XI.301 ff., relates that priests and lay men having contracted illegal marriages were expelled from Jerusalem and went to Shechem and founded the cult on Mt. Gerizim. This theory does not have to be probed here; it suffices to note that the Samaritans must be regarded as a branch of the Jewish people. Critical scholarship has known for
following that they also have preserved ancient haggadic material, which the Jews decided to abdicate because it led to heresy. Samaritan evidence is in fact very helpful in showing that Gnosticism has grown out of Hebrew religion).

**Philo**

Philo of Alexandria, although trained in the philosophies of the time and being influenced by the piety of the mystery religions, had as his main concern to demonstrate the truth of the Jewish Bible. It has been known for a long time that Philo’s major works dealing with the book of Genesis, namely, De opificio mundi and Legum allegoriae I-III, are not scientific treatises, but homiletical expositions having their “Sitz im Leben” in the preaching being held on the Sabbath in connection with the reading of the Torah in the Synagogue).

According to Philo, God is by nature such that he cannot do anything evil; God even has to employ agents in carrying out punishment upon men). He also employed agents when he created man:

Moses, when treating in his lessons of wisdom of the creation of the world, after having said of all other things that they were made by

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3) See Z. FRANKEL, Über die palästinensische und alexandrinische Schriftforschung (Programm des Breslauer Seminars) (Breslau 1854), p. 33, and more recently H. THYSEN, Der Stil der jüdisch-hellenistischen Homilie (FRLANT 47) (Göttingen 1956), p. 7. The third work on Genesis by Philo, namely, Quaestiones in Genesis, has the character of a treatise.

4) See De fuga et invent. 66.