

# THE FATHERS ON THE FUTURE

A 2nd-Century Eschatology for the  
21st-Century Church

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## Go Deeper Excursus 7 The Chiasm of the Epistle of Barnabas

The authorship, date, and provenance of the so-called *Epistle of Barnabas* are difficult to determine with great confidence.<sup>1</sup> It is fairly certain that the ascription in the title was a later addition and that the author was not the apostle Barnabas.<sup>2</sup> The preponderance of scholars regard an origin or destination of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia, or Rome as unlikely, and Syria or Antioch is regarded as possible, but not probable. As a result of my own work in *Barnabas*, I have tentatively concluded that the book was probably written sometime in the late first or early second century, perhaps in Egypt or Palestine.<sup>3</sup> If the letter was associated in some way with Alexandria,<sup>4</sup> we can assume that it was either written from Alexandria to a group elsewhere in Egypt, or written to a group in a nearby region such as Palestine, or even from Palestine to Alexandria.<sup>5</sup> Though he

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<sup>1</sup> For a helpful survey on the critical issues involved, see Leslie W. Barnard, “The ‘Epistle of Barnabas’ and Its Contemporary Setting,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt Part II, Principat*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, vol. 27, 1, *Religion (Vorkonstantinische Christentum: Apostolischen Väter und Apologeten)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993), 172–80.

<sup>2</sup> James Carleton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background*, WUNT, 2 Series, vol. 64 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 3–7. Then again, even such a conclusion against the apostle Barnabas as the author would actually go beyond what the evidence would permit. We simply do not know.

<sup>3</sup> See discussion on the place of origin in Ferdinand-Rupert Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief*, Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern, ed. Norbert Brox, G. Kretschmar, and Kurt Niederwimmer, vol. 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 119–30. The issues are quite complex and the evidence “does not justify dogmatic statements about the origin and background of the epistle” (Robert A. Kraft, *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary*, vol. 3, *Barnabas and the Didache*, ed. Robert M. Grant [Camden, NJ: Nelson, 1965], 54).

<sup>4</sup> This is the general scholarly consensus (Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 271–72; Janni Loman, “The Letter of Barnabas in Early Second-Century Egypt,” in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen* ed. Anthony Hilhorst and George H. van Kooten, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, vol. 59 [Leiden: Brill, 2005]). Prigent suggests the document arose in Syria (Pierre Prigent, *Les Testimonia dans le christianisme primitif: L'épître de Barnabé I–XVI et ses sources*, Études bibliques [Paris: Gabalda, 1961] and Wengst suggests Asia Minor (Klaus Wengst, *Tradition und Theologie des Barnabasbriefes*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, vol. 42 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971], 113–18).

<sup>5</sup> Barnard favors the view that the book was probably written from Alexandria to a group of Jewish-Christians somewhere in Middle Egypt between about 117 and 132 C.E. (Leslie W. Barnard, “The Problem of the Epistle of Barnabas,” *Church Quarterly Review* 159.2 (1958): 212). Though I lean toward an Alexandrian origin for this letter, I

denied the title “teacher” (1.8; 4.9), the author functioned in that capacity, suggesting at least an informal authority from the perspective of the remote Christian community.<sup>6</sup>

As far as the date is concerned, we know that something had occurred in the author’s recent memory that he believed had fulfilled prophetic Scripture. In Barnabas 1.7 he wrote, “For the Master has made known to us through the prophets things past and things present, and has given us a foretaste of things to come. Consequently, when we see these things come to pass, one thing after the other just as he predicted, we ought to make a richer and loftier offering out of reverence for him.” In 2.6 we see that God had abolished the sacrifices, suggesting that the temple had been destroyed. Lindemann and Paulsen suggest that reference is made to the construction of a new temple to Jupiter, which occurred around AD 130 (16.3–4). Yet at the same time, they note that no mention is made of the Bar Kochba revolt, between 132 and 135. Thus, they conclude, the epistle can be dated quite precisely between AD 130 and 132.<sup>7</sup> However, I am not convinced that the author of this letter would have regarded a Roman temple dedicated to Jupiter as an attempt to rebuild the temple of the Old Covenant. In any case, many scholars appear to find the median date of about AD 100 most satisfying.<sup>8</sup>

The point of the letter was to show the true Christian interpretation and application of the Old Testament law in light of the Christ event and current events, demonstrating that God has always been interested in moral application rather than external ritual. Thus, *Barnabas* was likely an early Jewish Christian work written at a time after the destruction of the temple in an attempt to explain how the Old Testament remained relevant even after its sacrifices were incapable of being performed. In the course of the author’s attempt to explain Old Testament passages through a New Testament lens, he approaches the fourth commandment—to keep the Sabbath holy—in an allegorical sense, applying it eschatologically to a future age, in fact, to the seven-thousandth “millennium” of human history. This age would commence after Christ’s return. Thus, *Barnabas* has been traditionally understood as evidence of an early Alexandrian form of premillennialism.

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think the plausibility of a Palestinian destination in the late first century may have been overlooked in scholarship. It certainly would help explain the letter’s concern over the first (or, perhaps, the second) Jewish revolt and the destruction (or reconstruction) of the temple in Jerusalem. Though by no means conclusive, the way the author refers to Syrians, Arabs, and Egyptians may suggest that he wrote to or from Judea or Samaria, situated in the midst of these surrounding nations (Barn. 9.6).

<sup>6</sup> See Did. 13.1–2; 15.1–2. The teacher appears to be among the second generation Christians because he refers to the twelve apostles as past, but having preached to his own generation (*Barn.* 8.3).

<sup>7</sup> Franz Xaver Funk, Andreas Lindemann, Henning Paulsen, et al., eds. *Die Apostolischen Väter: Griechisch-deutsche Parallelausgabe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 24.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion of the relevant internal evidence, see Prostmeier, *Barnabasbrief*, 111–19.

## The Chiliasm of Barnabas Revisited

In 1959, Albert Hermans could still refer to “l’avis presque unanime des commentateurs” that Barnabas 15 presents a version of early Christian chiliasm.<sup>9</sup> Yet in the following generation, the tide had turned so decisively that in 1990 Everett Ferguson could answer the question: “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?” with a decisive “No.”<sup>10</sup> In this chapter, I revisit the allegedly settled question, arguing that Barnabas 15 does, in fact, present a form of chiliastic eschatology.<sup>11</sup> Modern readers of *Barnabas* who have argued for a non-chiliastic interpretation of chapter 15 have exaggerated the thoroughness of Hermans’ exegesis and have assumed contradictions or conflation in the text.

Persistent interpretational missteps have led to a non-chiliastic interpretation of Barnabas 15: (1) identifying the change in “sun, moon, and stars” in 15.5 as a renewal of creation rather than as signs of cosmic judgment at the coming of Christ; (2) interpreting the banishment of lawlessness and the accompanying renewal in 15.7 as cosmic rather than personal in scope; (3) repeatedly asserting Barnabas 15 describes two sabbaths when the text itself does not; (4) misunderstanding the dative relative pronoun in 15.8 as a reference to the “eighth day” rather than to the “seventh day” as the means “by which”—or period “during which”—the “eighth day” is inaugurated; (5) generally failing to attend to the tenses of the participles and their syntactical relationships to the main verbs in 15.5, 15.7, and 15.8; (6) anachronistically interpreting *Barnabas* (late first/early second-century) in light of Clement of Alexandria’s (late-second/early-third century) complex attempt at synthesizing the earlier world-week chiliastic eschatology with a Valentinian allegorical number-symbolology of the hebdomad and ogdoad in *Stromata* 6.16; and (7) failing to account for

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<sup>9</sup> Albert Hermans, “Le Pseudo-Barnabé Est-il Millénariste?” *ETL* 35.4 (1959): 849. On the identification of the author of *Barnabas* as a chiliast, see Lyford Paterson Edwards, “The Transformation of Early Christianity from an Eschatological to a Socialized Movement” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1919), 5; James A. Kleist, ed. and trans., *The Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, The Epistles and the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, The Fragments of Papias, The Epistle of Diognetus* (New York: Newman, 1948), 179.

<sup>10</sup> Everett Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast? An Example of Hellenistic Number Symbolism in *Barnabas* and Clement of Alexandria” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). See most recently, Jonathan Lookadoo, *The Epistle of Barnabas: A Commentary*, Apostolic Father Commentary Series (Eugene: Cascade, 2022), 112. Understandably, modern apologists for amillennialism have adopted this position on the interpretation of *Barn.* 15 post-haste in an attempt to counter premillennialists who point polemically at the strong showing of early chiliastic church fathers. See, e.g., Hill, *Regnum Caelorum*, 77.

<sup>11</sup> That Barnabas did not actually embrace a future Millennium, believing the seventh and eighth days were merely symbolic and pointed to the same period, is argued by many today, though not by all. So influential has this interpretation become, that Paget suggests in a brief summary of the eschatology of Barnabas, “Final redemption appear to involve a return of Christ (7.9f.) and possibly a millennial kingdom (chap. 15)” (James Carleton Paget, “The Epistle of Barnabas,” in *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Paul Foster [London: T. & T. Clark, 2007], 79. See Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (London: Barton, Longman, & Todd, 1964), 396-401; D. H. Kromminga, *The Millennium in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1945), 29-40; Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 157-67. In support of the view that Barnabas was a chiliast, see J. W. Mealy, *After the Thousand Years: Resurrection and Judgment in Revelation 20*, JSNTSup, vol. 70, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 48. Beale says Mealy’s view is merely “plausible” (G. K. Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998], 150).

the varieties of chiliasm in the early church and how the scheme of the seventh and eighth days in Barnabas 15 fits within that historical-theological context.

Scholars have lately questioned whether the author of *Barnabas* was a chiliast who asserted a unique thousand-year period between Christ's physical return and the establishment of the eternal condition, or the "new world."<sup>12</sup> That is, did the author view the coming eschatological sabbath following Christ's return—typologically equivalent to the seventh day of 1000 years—as a definite period that comes to a close, giving way to the "eighth day" of eternity? Or did the author regard the eschatological sabbath day following Christ's return as itself the eternal day, conflated with the "eighth"? The issue, then, is not really whether the author of *Barnabas* sets forth a premillennial eschatology; he does.<sup>13</sup> The issue is how the author conceives of that future eschatological sabbath in terms of its character and chronology. Is it a symbol for the new creation with no distinction? Or is it a unique period of a thousand years distinct from—but related to—the establishment of the subsequent new creation?

In his attempt to reorient the interpretation of the law in keeping with its intended spiritual or moral meaning, the author of *Barnabas* attends to the sabbath by first quoting a few passages. He writes, "Moreover, concerning the sabbath it is written in the ten words, by which he spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai face to face, 'And sanctify the sabbath of the Lord with pure hands and with a pure heart (καὶ ἀγιάσατε τὸ σάββατον κυρίου χερσὶν καθαραῖς καὶ καρδίᾳ καθαρᾷ)'" (Barn. 15.1).<sup>14</sup> He continues with another allusion: "And in another he says, 'If my sons will keep the

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<sup>12</sup> With regard to the identification of "chiliasm" in the early church, Rordorf notes, "We shall find ourselves on sure ground only in the cases where the sources themselves suppose that *after* the expected sabbath another epoch will follow, that is to say the eternal eighth day: in these cases we are clearly dealing with the chiliastic viewpoint" (Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968], 91).

<sup>13</sup> It is beyond dispute that in *Barnabas*, the eschatological "sabbath" follows—it does not precede—the return of Christ. Barrett notes, "Notwithstanding the confusion introduced by the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath it is clear that *Barnabas*' real view was that he and his contemporaries stood within the 6000 years, still waiting for the Son of God to usher in the millennial period with heavenly signs and portents" (C. K. Barrett, "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956], 371). The eschatological sabbath in *Barnabas* is not a present reality associated with Christ's current heavenly session (as in amillennialism), nor does the eschatological sabbath arrive prior to the physical return of Christ (as in postmillennialism).

<sup>14</sup> The sources for this quotation are not easy to identify. It appears to be a very loose paraphrase (or interpretation) of the fourth commandment, which actually exhorted either to "remember" the sabbath (Exod 20:8) or to "keep" the sabbath (Exod 31:13–16; Deut 5:12). In Barn. 15:1 the imperative is to "sanctify" (ἀγιάσατε) the sabbath, which appears in Jeremiah 17:22 and Ezekiel 20:20 in reference to sanctifying "the day of the sabbaths" and "the sabbaths," respectively (Cf. Hans Windisch, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, vol. 3, *Der Barnabasbrief*, HNT (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920), 381. Cf. Ferguson, "Was *Barnabas* a Chiliast?," 160. The qualifier "with pure hands and with a pure heart" has no clear parallel in any of the iterations of the sabbath commandments in the Old Testament. It is similar to Psalm 24:4 (LXX 23:4) in answer to the question, "Who may ascend onto the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place?" (24:3): "One who has clean hands and a pure heart" (24:4) (On the sources for the *testimonia* in Barn. 15, see Prigent, *Les testimonia dans le christianisme primitif*, 65–70). Yet even in the way in which the author set up his loose paraphrase, he created some distance between the actual written words and what God was saying by means of those written words (ἐν οἷς ἐλάλησεν). Thus, the author was not necessarily claiming to have quoted directly from a written text.

sabbath, then I will place my mercy upon them (ἐὰν φυλάξωσιν οἱ υἱοὶ μου τὸ σάββατον, τότε ἐπιθήσω τὸ ἔλεός μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς)” (Barn. 15.2).<sup>15</sup>

The author then reaches back to the foundation of the sabbath in the days of creation: “He mentions the sabbath at the beginning of creation: ‘And in six days God made (καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἕξ ἡμέραις) the works of his hands, and he finished on the seventh day (καὶ συνετέλεσεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ), and he rested on it, and he sanctified it’ (καὶ κατέπαυσεν ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν)” (Barn. 15.3). This inexact quotation appears to depend loosely on Genesis 2:2-3 (and perhaps Exodus 20:11)—“And God finished on the sixth day (καὶ συνετέλεσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ) his works he did, and he rested on the seventh day (καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ) from all his works which he did. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it (καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν)” (Gen 2:2-3, LXX). And Exodus says, “For in six days the Lord made (ἐν γὰρ ἕξ ἡμέραις ἐποίησεν Κύριος) the heaven and the earth and all things in them, and he rested on the seventh day (καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ); therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it (καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν)” (Exod 20:11, LXX). The author of *Barnabas* does not quite follow the LXX of Genesis 2:2, which says God finished ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ (“in the sixth day”) and rested τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ (“on the seventh day”). Instead, Barnabas seems to follow the sense of the Hebrew text, stating that God finished ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ (“on the seventh day”) and rested and sanctified it (Barn. 15.3).<sup>16</sup> Then, in his interpretation of the phrase “and he finished,” Barnabas rightly corrects his own quotation: “Take care, little children, what this means: ‘he finished in six days’ (συνετέλεσεν ἐν ἕξ ἡμέραις)” (Barn. 15.4). The interpretation of the phrase reinforces the ἐν ἕξ ἡμέραις reading: “This means that in six thousand years the Lord will finish everything (ἐν ἑξακισχίλιος ἔτεσιν συντελέσει κύριος τὰ σύμπαντα)” (Barn. 15.4).

If Barnabas were to expound upon his Greek paraphrase of the Hebrew text of Genesis 2:2, with God both completing his work on the seventh day and resting on the seventh day, this would result in a seven-day workweek of sorts as well as a future seventh 1000-year period during which God both works and rests. Yet this is not the direction in which the author takes his exposition. In the author’s eschatological antitype, he concludes that “in six thousand years the Lord will finish everything (ἐν ἑξακισχίλιος ἔτεσιν συντελέσει κύριος τὰ σύμπαντα)” (Barn. 15.4). In short, though the author seems to follow the reckoning of the Hebrew text in his loose quotation, he follows instead the LXX (along with the Syriac and Samaritan Pentateuch) in his explication, thus creating a peculiar dissonance.

<sup>15</sup> Here we have another instance of both a very loose allusion and conflation of texts. The first part is a faint echo of Exod 31:16—“The sons of Israel will keep the sabbaths (καὶ φυλάξουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ τὰ σάββατα).” The latter part of the allusion does not seem to derive from any particular text, though Ferguson suggests Isa 44:3—“I will set the spirit on you, and my blessing upon your children” (ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμα σου, καὶ τὰς εὐλογίας μου ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα σου).”

<sup>16</sup> The MT reads: ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה וישבת ביום השביעי (“And God finished on the seventh day the work which he did and rested on the seventh day”). This is also followed by the Vulgate (*conplevitque Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat et requievit die septimo*).

If the author is simply inconsistent, it is futile to seek out an explanation for his shift from the Hebrew reading to his interpretation of the Septuagint reading.<sup>17</sup> However, the author possibly regarded both readings as valid, each teaching a distinct aspect of the eschatological plan and purpose of God—that is, while God puts to rest certain aspects of the long history of human sin and suffering, he simultaneously continues to work on his new creation plan during the eschatological sabbath to bring it to ultimate completion.

In the end, regarding the practical implications for sabbath observance (the main purpose of this passage), God’s completion of work during the seventh day would grant non-sabbath-keeping Christians an explanation for why they do not observe the seventh-day sabbath. Regarding the eschatological implications, it would allow for an eschatological scheme in which certain kinds of redemptive activity would continue during that seventh 1000-year period. In any case, the author never seems to return to the Hebrew reading of Genesis 2:2; he leaves its assertion behind in favor of the six-day completion and seventh-day rest.

The author goes on to validate his interpretational move from the type of “six days” to the antitype of “six thousand years:” “For the day to him signifies a thousand years, and he himself testifies for me, saying, ‘Behold, a day of the Lord will be as a thousand years’” (Barn. 15.4).<sup>18</sup> He

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<sup>17</sup> Ferguson first attempts to break *Barnabas* free from its seemingly clear premillennial framework by suggesting a pragmatic inconsistency in his thought regarding the seventh and eighth days. He writes, “*Barnabas* may indeed have drawn on two different eschatological traditions, and the whole treatise shows how little the author was interested in consistency. Whatever served to make a point could be brought in. The scheme of seven ages in the early part of the chapter relativizes the weekly Sabbath for him, and the imagery of the number 8 in the latter part of the chapter connects with the Christian’s special day. The two symbolisms serve different functions in the argument, so there was no need to harmonize them. Neither serves the purpose of periodization” (Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 163). In this connection he cites Jean Daniélou, “La Typologie millénariste de la semaine dans le christianisme primitive,” *VC* 2.1 (1948): 1–8 and Windisch, *Der Barnabasbrief*, 383–84). Of course, this is merely a suggestion—“*Barnabas* may indeed have.” Ferguson then alleges that “the author was not interested in chronological calculation....He drew on chiliastic traditions, but he was not interested in them for their own sake. He subordinated chiliastic thought to another purpose—to eliminate the weekly Sabbaths” (Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 163). This assertion seems to beg the question. It assumes the text as we have it does not set forth a chronology of past, present, and future history, uses the seventh-day sabbath and eighth-day new creation pragmatically only to shift attention from the Jews’ Sabbath to the Christian’s Lord’s Day, and has no regard for any millennial scheme of a seven-thousand-year future era preceding the new creation. But if the text as we have it is merely a patchwork of traditions sloppily stitched together in service of his polemic, on what basis can one conclude that the author was uninterested in or not a proponent of a chiliastic eschatological framework? In short, if it is true that the author of *Barnabas* is drawing on inconsistent traditions for the purpose of his polemic against Sabbatarianism, and if Barnabas’s purpose is not to establish a consistent eschatological chronology, then it would be equally inappropriate to draw from *Barnabas* 15 either premillennial or non-premillennial eschatological conclusions. We would be left, essentially, with no clear testimony from Barnabas regarding his actual eschatological expectations.

<sup>18</sup> Though some may point back to Ps 90:4 as the origin for this notion, the language here more closely resembles 2 Pet 3:8—μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη (“one day to the Lord is like a thousand years”). The concept is not new. Sometime in the second century B.C., the *Book of Jubilees* states, with reference to Adam’s death seventy years short of 1000 years, “And he lacked seventy years of one thousand years; for one thousand years are as one day in the testimony of the heavens and therefore was it written concerning the tree of knowledge: ‘On the day that ye eat thereof ye shall die.’ For this reason he did not complete the years of this day; for he died during it” (Jub. 4.30) (R. H. Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1913], 19). Nevertheless, this aside simply serves

then returns to his original assertion: “So then, little children, in six days—in the six thousand years—everything will be brought to an end (συντελεσθήσεται τὰ σύμπαντα)” (Barn. 15.4). In this assertion the author again appears to neglect his earlier loose paraphrase of the Hebrew text of the original creation-week language and suggests that all things will be accomplished or “brought to an end” within the six thousand years of human history.

The author then continues his exposition with a partial quote: “And he rested on the seventh day (καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ)” (Barn. 15.5). This is a direct quote from the LXX of Exodus 20:11. His typological interpretation follows: “This means: when his Son comes, he will abolish the season of the lawless one, he will judge the ungodly, and he will change the sun and the moon and the stars, then he will truly rest on the seventh day” (15.5).<sup>19</sup> Some important exegetical questions arise here. First, who is the subject of the future active indicative verbs καταργήσει (“he will abolish”), κρινεῖ (“he will judge”), and ἀλλάξει (“he will change”)? Second, what constitutes the “season of the lawless one (τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ ἀνόμου)”? Third, what is the meaning of the apparent cosmic changes of the “sun, moon, and stars” (τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας)? Fourth, who is the subject of “he will truly rest” (καλῶς καταπαύσεται)—God or his Son? Finally, what is the significance of the chronological indicators “when” (ὅταν) and “then” (τότε)?

On the first issue, it seems the more natural subject is the Son: ὅταν ἐλθὼν ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ... (“When his Son arrives...”). The aorist active participle of ἔρχομαι, in conjunction with the ὅταν and the future active indicatives, functions similarly to the same form found in *2 Clement* 17.4: τοῦτο δὲ λέγει τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς ἐπιφανείας αὐτοῦ, ὅτε ἐλθὼν λυτρώσεται ἡμᾶς (“And this refers to the day of his appearance, when he will come and redeem us”) (cf. Did. 11.1). Both the aorist participle and the future indicatives, then, find their subject in ὁ υἱός. It is the Son, who, at his future coming, will “abolish,” “judge,” and “change”—all events associated with the future second advent.

Second, the abolition of the “season of the lawless one (τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ ἀνόμου)” has particular eschatological overtones. Even in *Barnabas* itself, we read the following: “Therefore, we must take heed in the last days (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις), for the whole time of our faith will not benefit us if not now, in the lawless season (ἐν τῷ ἀνόμῳ) and in the coming stumbling blocks (τοῖς μέλλουσιν σκανδάλοις), we resist as is fitting children of God, so that the black one may not have an opportunity to sneak in” (Barn. 4.9). The “lawless season” and “season of the lawless one” likely refer to the same period, related to the “last days.” The author seems to have envisioned a future “lawless season” during which the “coming stumbling blocks” would occur, associated with a particular “lawless one” (ἄνομος) or “black one” (ὁ μέλας). The author of *Barnabas* possibly had

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the purpose of justifying the author’s typological reading of the six days of creation as six thousand years of human history.

<sup>19</sup> Barrett points out several Jewish treatments of the sabbath as a type or foreshadowing of an eschatological rest: *Tamid* 7.4; *Genesis Rabbah* 17.7; *Life of Adam and Eve* 51.2 (Barrett, “The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 371n1).

in mind the content of the “mini apocalypse” of Didache 16, which begins with a warning to “be ready” for the Lord’s return, because “the whole time of your faith will not benefit you if you were not made perfect in the last season (ἐν τῷ ἐσχάτῳ καιρῷ τελειωθῆτε)” (Did. 16.2). The Didachist then describes a series of hardships and trials that people will endure “in the last days (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις)” (Did. 16.3). At the climax of those calamitous trials—including false prophets, corruptors, hatred, lawlessness, persecution, and betrayal—“then the deceiver of the world will appear (τότε φανήσεται ὁ κοσμοπλανῆς) as a son of God and will do signs and wonders, and the earth will be delivered into his hands” (16.4). This will then be followed by a fiery ordeal, leading to many being caused to stumble and to perish (σκανδαλισθήσονται πολλοὶ καὶ ἀπολοῦνται)” (16.5). This individual “deceiver of the world” who works signs and wonders will then be confronted by the coming of the Lord (Did. 16.6–8). This, in turn, reflects much of the language and imagery from 2 Thessalonians 2. There Paul describes the future coming of a “man of lawlessness” (ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας), also called the “son of destruction” (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας) (2 Thess 2:3), who exalts himself, claims to be divine, and sets himself up as an object of worship (2:4). Paul then calls this “man of lawlessness” the “lawless one” (ὁ ἄνομος), who will deceive people with signs and wonders (2:9–10). However, that one will be destroyed by the coming of the Lord (2:8). The language and imagery of 2 Thessalonians 2 and Didache 16 provide a compelling background to the language of Barnabas 15. It is likely the author knew at least one if not both of these texts; and he was at least familiar with the contours of the early Christian eschatology to which they testify. Thus, the “season of the lawless one” (τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ ἀνόμου) in Barnabas 15.5, which the Son will abolish by his coming, refers to the specific period of trials—the last stumbling blocks—preceding the coming of Christ as judge.

Third, what is the meaning of the apparent cosmic changes of the “sun, moon, and stars” (τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελμήνην καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας)? Many assume the obvious interpretation would involve some kind of positive change of the actual celestial bodies, marking the epochal transition from the present “heavens and earth” to a “new heavens and earth.” Thus, for instance, Rhodes notes, “God will therefore ‘finish’ all things in six thousand years—destroying the time of the lawless one, judging the ungodly, and altering (renewing?) creation—before his sabbath rest truly begins.”<sup>20</sup> Rhodes seems to accept his own parenthetical gloss (“renewing?”) in his brief exposition, apparently conflating this changing of the sun, moon, and stars with the “cosmic renovation” of 15.7, and thus rendering the seventh day and eighth day as concurrent.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> James N. Rhodes, *The Epistle of Barnabas and the Deuteronomistic Tradition: Polemics, Paraenesis, and the Legacy of the Gold-Calf Incident*, WUNT, 2 Series, vol. 188, ed. Jörg Frey (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 70.

<sup>21</sup> Rhodes, *Epistle of Barnabas*, 70. Like many modern scholars, Rhodes seems to have been misled by Ferguson’s reading of Clement of Alexandria into Barn. 15. He writes, “Earlier scholars saw Barnabas as a representative of chiliastic ideas whereby the seventh day represents a thousand year interregnum before the renewal of all things. More recent scholarship affirms instead that Barnabas collapses the seventh and eighth days into one, a conception that is found in Clement of Alexandria and linked to the fact that the seventh letter (η) of the Greek alphabet serves as the number eight (η’)” (Rhodes, *Epistle of Barnabas*, 70–71n119). Rhodes provides no additional critical evaluation of Ferguson’s arguments.



However, the renovation of creation in the changing of the sun, moon, and stars is an exegetical misstep with severe interpretive consequences.<sup>22</sup> It is difficult to find passages in canonical Scripture or early Christian literature in which “sun,” “moon,” and “stars” are transformed positively in connection with the coming of the Son of God. Rather, the Old Testament imagery of the coming Day of the Lord as well as the New Testament imagery of the coming of Christ relay a change of the sun, moon, and stars as signs of judgment. In fact, in Barnabas 15.5, the first two verbs associated with the coming of “his Son” relate to judgment—he will abolish (καταργήσει) the season of the lawless one and judge (κρινεῖ) the ungodly. Taking “he will change the sun and moon and stars” as a reference to the cosmic phenomena related to the judgment of the Day of the Lord makes the most sense, considering these three things all occur “when he comes” (ὅταν ἔλθῶν).

Fourth, we must identify the subject of “he will truly rest” (καλῶς καταπαύσεται). Does this refer to God or to “his Son”? Given the subject of the previous future indicative verbs is the Son, and that καταπαύσεται is also in the future indicative and connected syntactically to the rest of the same sentence with the ὅταν...τότε construction, and also given that the final clause provides no change of subject, it is most reasonable that the subject of καλῶς καταπαύσεται is the Son.

The final issue relates to the relationship between ὅταν (“when”) and τότε (“then”). The ὅταν is used to indicate the series of events concurrent with the coming. That is, when the Son comes (ἔλθῶν), he will abolish, judge, and change. The τότε clause then indicates a condition that immediately follows those actions as their consequence—the time of rest. Thus, the purpose of the author is to indicate the means by which the present “season of the lawless one” will be brought to a close and the future age of the sabbath will commence.

Up to this point, the author has established that the coming of the Son will abolish the season of the lawless one, judge the wicked, change the sun, moon, and stars, and thus conclude the six-thousand-year age since creation and commence the period in which he will “truly rest.” He does not seem to deal with the apparent contradiction of God both resting and working on the seventh

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<sup>22</sup> The verb ἀλλάσσω (“change”) could refer either to a positive change from worse to better (cf. Herm. Sim. 9.4.5) or to a negative change from better to worse (cf. Barn. 10.7). The three heavenly bodies are found in the context of judgment associated with the Day of the Lord in a number of passages. For example, Isa 13:9–11 says, “Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. So I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their wrongdoing; I will also put an end to the audacity of the proud and humiliate the arrogance of the tyrants” (NASB; cf. Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 2:10; 3:15). In Jesus’s words in the Olivet Discourse, he prophesies that “immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Matt 24:29; cf. Luke 21:25). And in Revelation 8:12, the fourth angel’s trumpet blast results in “a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.” The first-century apocryphal *Assumption of Moses*, too, makes the same connection: “And the earth shall tremble: to its confines shall it be shaken: and the high mountains shall be made low and the hills shall be shaken and fall. And the horns of the sun shall be broken and he shall be turned into darkness; and the moon shall not give her light, and be turned wholly into blood. And the circle of the stars shall be disturbed” (*As. Mos.* 10.4–5; cf. also *4 Ezra* 7.39.). See Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2: 421–422.

day due to his divergent allusions to Genesis 2:2 and Exodus 20:11. Thus far in his eschatological explication, it appears—at least on the surface—that the author of *Barnabas* believed everything would be brought to an end or finished in six days (Barn. 15.5), while the texts he quoted suggests God completed the work of his hands in those six days but “finished on the seventh day” (συνετέλεσεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ), “rested on it” (κατέπαυσεν ἐν αὐτῇ), and “sanctified it” (ἡγίασεν αὐτήν) (Barn. 15.3). Thus, two apparently mutually exclusive things took place in the past typological days of the creation week: God finished the works of his hands on the seventh day, and God rested on it.

Leaving this tension for a moment, we move on to the remainder of the typological interpretation of the sabbath. He begins with another quotation, “Moreover, he also says, in fact, ‘Sanctify (ἀγιάσεις) it with clean hands and a clean heart’ (Barn. 15.6).<sup>23</sup> Having relayed this exhortation to sanctify the sabbath, the author of *Barnabas* first explains what it cannot mean: a present fulfillment by strictly obeying the fourth commandment. He writes, “Therefore, if someone is now able to sanctify what God sanctified by being pure in heart, we have been completely deceived” (Barn. 15.6). God had “sanctified” the sabbath, the seventh day after creation, thereby extending a mandate for his people also to sanctify it by having clean hands and a pure heart. However, people now (νῦν) are unable to sanctify it as God intended, apparently because nobody is capable of being entirely pure and holy in heart and hand. The author takes the requirement of a pure heart literally, but rather than opting for its fulfillment through a rigorous perfectionism in this life, he pushes it forward into the future eschatological sabbath. The author of *Barnabas* leaves us with two alternatives: either God has deceived us by giving a command people cannot possibly keep, or the command to sanctify the sabbath is intended to be fulfilled in some future time when his people will be made capable of fulfilling it.

Not surprisingly, the second alternative is the direction in which he moves: “Then observe that (ἴδε ὅτι ἄρα) while we are truly resting (τότε καλῶς καταπαυόμενοι) we will sanctify it (ἀγιάσομεν αὐτήν), when we ourselves will be capable, having been made righteous and having received the promise (when the existence of lawlessness is no more, but when all things have been made new by the Lord) then we will be able to sanctify it, we ourselves having been sanctified first” (Barn. 15.7). The phrase τότε καλῶς καταπαυόμενοι (“while we are truly resting”) corresponds to the condition that comes upon the earth after the Son comes—“then he will truly rest on the seventh day (τότε καλῶς καταπαύσεται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ)” (15.5). Thus, in the author’s eschatological reckoning the “seventh day” of rest comes after the coming of the Son and corresponds to a 1000-year period, just as the six days of creation corresponded to a 6000-year period.

Several conditions will prevail during that future era, constituting “resting” and “sanctifying” the seventh day as understood spiritually and eschatologically. First, the redeemed will be able to fulfill the imperative to sanctify the sabbath because they will have been made capable—ὅτε

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<sup>23</sup> The second-person singular imperative seems to reflect the use of the second person singular throughout the ten commandments in Exodus 20 and need not concern us.

δυνησόμεθα. This implies a kind of transformation of character sufficient for perfect holiness. The future middle indicative is then modified by a string of adverbial participles of cause or attendant circumstance—explaining how it is that they will be made capable of ultimately sanctifying the sabbath. The participles support the assertion that the redeemed will be able to sanctify and thus rest on the eschatological sabbath. This is confirmed by the final τότε clause that concludes the chain of participles: “Then we will be able to sanctify it (τότε δυνησόμεθα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσαι), we ourselves having been sanctified first (αὐτοὶ ἀγιασθέντες πρῶτον)” (Barn. 15.7), returning us to his original assertion.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, the participles are best understood as relating not generally to the entire physical world but specifically to the redeemed people. To be eschatologically righteous (δικαιωθέντες) and holy (ἀγιασθέντες) are results of having received the promise (ἀπολαβόντες τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν), no longer existing in a state of lawlessness (μηκέτι οὔσης τῆς ἀνομίας) but rather all things having been made new by the Lord (καινῶν δὲ γεγονότων πάντων ὑπὸ κυρίου). Though it would be tempting to assign both the banishment of lawlessness and the renewal of all things universally to the cosmos—that is, all creation itself—this is implausible given the syntactical relationship between these participial phrases and the main verb. This is especially underscored by the emphatic use of αὐτοί both preceding and following the participles: “when we ourselves will be capable (ὅτε δυνησόμεθα αὐτοί)” (15.7) and “we ourselves having been sanctified first (αὐτοὶ ἀγιασθέντες πρῶτον)” (15.7). These emphatic uses of αὐτοί remind us that the participles refer to personal—not cosmic—conditions that enable the person to be capable of sinless and holy perfection. Specifically, the conditions involve “having received the promise” (ἀπολαβόντες τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν).

The phrase “the promise” (ἡ ἐπαγγελία), with the definite article, seems to refer to something well-known, related conceptually to the cessation of all lawlessness in a person’s life because they had been made completely new by the Lord.<sup>25</sup> Thus, most likely “the promise” relates to the realization of God’s plan of redemption when humanity is resurrected immortal and transformed into a new condition no longer subject to temptation and sin but made new by the Lord (see 1 Cor 15:51–54; Phil 3:20–21; 1 Thess 4:13–18). During the future sabbath—or seventh 1000-year period—the saints will be fully sanctified, sinless, made completely new by bodily resurrection and

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<sup>24</sup> The author logically structures his argument in Barn. 15.7 as follows:

“While we are truly resting we will sanctify it, when we ourselves will be capable,  
having been made righteous  
and having received the promise,  
(the existence of lawlessness being no more,  
but all things having been made new by the Lord),  
then we will be able to sanctify it, we ourselves having been sanctified first.”

<sup>25</sup> Though “the promise” is associated with the promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:39), the promise of the second coming of Christ (2 Pet 3:4), the promise of Israel’s inheritance of the land (Rom 4:13; 9:8; Gal 3:18), and eternal life in Christ (2 Tim 1:1; 1 John 2:25), the book of Hebrews associates “the promise” of entering sabbath rest—presumably related to the promise of eternal life and future inheritance (Heb 4:1; 9:15; 10:36).

glorification, able to be pure of heart and hand, and thus made capable of truly sanctifying the eschatological sabbath.<sup>26</sup>

In the preceding eschatological discussion, the author has sought to annul the Jewish and Judaizing interpretation and application of the Old Testament sabbath law by 1) showing the creation week was actually meant to be understood eschatologically, not literally; and 2) demonstrating that the command itself to keep the sabbath holy was in any case impossible to fulfill in our present sinful state; thus, it must be fulfilled in the future when we are made sinless and immortal. This, then, presents the Christian's spiritual and eschatological interpretation of the fulfillment of the sabbath. The author continues his assault on the present observance of sabbaths as holy days, contrasting it with the Christian celebration of the resurrection of Jesus not on the seventh day but on the eighth.

He writes, quoting from the LXX of Isaiah 1:13, “And finally he certainly says to them, ‘Your new moons and sabbaths I cannot endure.’ Do you get what he means? ‘Such sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but that which I have made (ἀλλὰ ὁ πεποίηκα), by which, after causing everything to rest (ἐν ᾧ καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα), I will make a beginning of an eighth day (ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ογδόης ποιήσω), which is a beginning of another world (ὁ ἐστὶν ἄλλου κόσμου ἀρχήν)” (Barn. 15.8).<sup>27</sup> The tenses are important here. First, writing as from the perspective of the Lord himself, the author of *Barnabas* has God declaring that the merely human sabbaths repeated week after

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<sup>26</sup> This reading is confirmed by the author's discussion in Barn. 6, in which he suggests an already/not-yet understanding of the individual believer's new creation. In explaining the fulfillment of the inheritance of the “good land” flowing with milk and honey promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Barn. 6.8, 10; cf. Exod 33:1–3, Deut. 6:18), casting Jesus as both the second Adam and the new “Joshua” (Barn. 6.9). This is spiritually fulfilled in the present: “Therefore, since he renewed us (ἐκαίνεσεν) by the release from sins, he made us [to be] another type (ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς ἄλλον τύπον), as having the soul of children, as if he were fashioning us anew (ἀναπλάσσοντος)” (Barn. 6.11). The author then applies Genesis 1:26 to Christians—not only created anew according to the image of Christ, but also given authority to rule over the birds of the sky and fish of the sea as well as to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (Barn. 6.12). This passage, the author says, refers to the “a second creation” (δευτέραν πλάσιν) made “in the last days” (6.13). With the principle that he is making the last things like the first, he returns to the promise of leading his people into a land flowing with milk in honey to rule over it (6.13, Exod 33.3). At this point the author notes that Christians in the present age have already been “formed anew” (ἀναπεπλάσμεθα) through the transformation of the heart from stone to flesh (Ezek. 11.19), rendering our hearts a holy temple of the Lord (Barn. 6.14–15). Thus, the church, having been transformed spiritually in the present were “led into the good land” (6.17). Yet this spiritual renewal does not exhaust the eschatological fulfillment. Rather, he sees the present spiritual reality as but the beginning of a future fulfillment. Just as children are first nourished by honey, then milk (πρώτον...μέλιτι, εἶτα γάλακτι), Christians are presently nourished (ζωοποιούμενοι) by the faith of the promise and by the word, but will, in the future, live (ζήσομεν, future active indicative) when they will be exercising dominion over the earth (Barn. 6.17). The author sees this ultimate fulfillment as a future reality, noting that at the present we are not able to rule over the beasts, fish, or sea, that we do not presently have rule and authority over creation (Barn. 6.18). He writes, “If, then, this does not now take place (εἰ οὖν οὐ γίνεται τοῦτο νῦν), then he has told us when: when even we ourselves have been perfected (ὅταν καὶ αὐτοὶ τελειωθῶμεν) to become heirs of the Lord's covenant” (Barn. 6.19). Similarly, in his discussion of the future sabbath age, when we ourselves have been made new—not just partially and spiritually, but entirely—we will receive the promise (15.7). Cf. similar connections made by Lookadoo, *Epistle of Barnabas*, 112.

<sup>27</sup> Prigent suggests the possibility that this first-person quotation may be a paraphrastic treatment of 2 En. 33.1–2 (Prigent, *L'Épître de Barnabé*, 69). The thoughts are similar. Considering, though, 2 En. 33 is available only in a late Slavonic translation of an earlier Greek text, it could be that *Barnabas* 15 preserves a somewhat purer form of that passage, though this is speculative.

week are not acceptable. The only acceptable “sabbath” is “that which I have made” (ὁ πεποίηκα, perfect active indicative)—the sabbath already fashioned in God’s plan and purpose. This corresponds to the sabbath rest ushered in by the return of Christ, during which the righteous will have been made perfectly new, free from all lawlessness, and holy in heart and hands. The next clause then tells us that this very sabbath will be the means by which (or the time during which) God commences a completely new world: “by which...I will make a beginning of an eighth day” (ἐν ᾧ...ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδῶς ποιήσω). The aorist active participial phrase, καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα, as an attendant circumstance related to the main verb, ποιήσω, is vital to understanding the logical (and thus chronological) relationship between the seventh-day “sabbath” and the eighth-day “other world.”<sup>28</sup>

Those exegetes who conflate the seventh and eighth days, making the sabbath rest itself the eighth day—the “other world”—have neglected the syntactical relationship between the aorist participle and its place prior to the future active verb. Had the author intended to mark these periods as coterminous, he would have had to assert a simultaneous action of the “setting everything at rest” (καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα) and making “the beginning of an eighth day” (ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδῶς ποιήσω). To assert this, however, the author would have used not an aorist participle (καταπαύσας), but a present participle. Instead, the author used an aorist participle preceding the main verb, the normal way of indicating a circumstance that precedes the action of the main verb in the future tense. In short, the author’s grammatical and syntactical construction makes the best sense if he intended to communicate that the period of seventh-day sabbath rest indicated by καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα chronologically precedes the eighth day “other world.”<sup>29</sup>

Many render ἐν ᾧ as “in which,” meaning “during which,” then claim the author actually reckoned the eighth day of the new world and the seventh day sabbath as the same day, thus swallowing up the seventh 1000-year sabbath by an eternal rest.<sup>30</sup> Even if ἐν ᾧ were meant to be

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<sup>28</sup> Burton notes, “If the action of the participle is antecedent to that of the verb, the participle most commonly precedes the verb, but not invariably. Such a participle is usually in the Aorist tense..., but occasionally in the Present.... If the action of the participle is simultaneous with that of the verb, it may either precede or follow the verb, more frequently the latter. It is of course in the Present tense” (Ernest De Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3d ed. [Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1898], 174).

<sup>29</sup> The modern interpretations of Barn. 15 that conflate the seventh and eighth days overlook the fact that the author presents the history of the world as consisting of six consecutive days that equal six consecutive thousand-year periods spanning the course of human history. At the end of the sixth thousand-year period, the Lord will return and destroy the times of the lawless one. Then, after that return, the world will experience the “sabbath,” the seventh day. In the author’s own typological scheme, this seventh day must last a thousand years. One may be tempted to deflect this simple fact by suggesting that the author of *Barnabas* should not be expected to interpret the “six thousand years” and thus the “seventh thousand year” literally, given his deep proclivity for allegorical and non-literal interpretation (e.g., Kraft, *Barnabas and Didache*, 128). However, the six-thousand-year scheme is already the result of the author’s allegorical interpretation of the six days of creation, and the future seventh thousand-year period is an interpretation of the seventh-day rest of the creation week. An allegory of an allegory is certainly plausible, but not likely.

<sup>30</sup> Rhodes notes: “Barnabas speaks of the sabbath ‘on which’ (ἐν ᾧ) the eighth day will be created. Earlier scholars saw Barnabas as a representative of chiliastic ideas whereby the seventh day represents a thousand year interregnum before the renewal of all things. More recent scholarship affirms instead that Barnabas collapses the seventh and eight [sic] days into one, a conception that is found in Clement of Alexandria and linked to the fact that the seventh letter

taken as a marker of the period of time—“during which”—this would still not collapse the eighth day into the seventh. Rather, the author would be asserting that the renewal of creation will occur during the future sabbath period, during which (ἐν ᾧ) God will actively and progressively make all things new, resulting in the complete renewal of creation at its conclusion. The author does not say, as is alleged by some, ἐν ᾧ ποιήσω ἡμέρας ὀγδόης (“in which I will make an eighth day”), but ἐν ᾧ ποιήσω ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδόης, that is, “in which I am making a beginning of an eighth day.” The term ἀρχή can be understood as the source, cause, or origin of the eighth day that flows from the seventh.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the phrase ἐν ᾧ is often used instrumentally or as agency, better translated “by which” or “by means of which.” Thus, the eschatological sabbath would be viewed as the means by which God makes the beginning of a new world, represented by the eighth day. In either case—during which or by which—the text is not asserting that the seventh day is the eighth day but that the seventh day is the beginning or commencement of the eighth day—a new world.<sup>32</sup>

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(η) of the Greek alphabet serves as the number eight (η’)” (Rhodes, *Epistle of Barnabas and the Deuteronomistic Tradition*, 70–71).

<sup>31</sup> Windisch suggests, “Ob er in dem Stück 1—7 über das siebte Jahrtausend hinausgedacht und im Sinn von Apoc 20 1 ff. . . . dieses Jahrtausend als sein Zwischenreich sich vorgestellt hat, ist sehr fraglich: was Apokalypse 20 7 ff. auf das 1000jährige Reich noch folgt, ist nach Barn. 5 endgültig schon am Ende der 6000 Jahre geschehen” (Windisch, *Der Barnabasbrief*, 385). However, this would only be the case if one insists on reading the transformations accomplished at the coming of Christ at the end of 6000 years in cosmic rather than individual terms. Thus, the seventh period of a thousand years would not itself be regarded as the eighth day, but merely the beginning phase of that new world.

<sup>32</sup> The use of the “world-week” scheme of 6000 years of human history followed by a “sabbath” rest is common among both Jewish and Christian writers, regardless of whether they are chiliasts (see comprehensive survey of the primary source evidence for the “world-week” scheme in Alfred Wikenhauser, “Weltwoche und tausendjähriges Reich,” *TQ* 127.4 [1947]: 399–417). Wikenhauser explains, “Da nach dem Schema der Weltwoche das Ende dieser Weltzeit in das Jahr 6000 fällt, müssen die Anhänger des Chiliasmus mit diesem Jahr das tausendjährige Reich und mit dem Jahr 7000 das ewige Gottesreich beginnen, die Gegner des Chiliasmus dagegen mit dem Jahr 6000 das definitive Weltende und den Beginn der zeitlosen Ewigkeit eintreten lassen” (Wikenhauser, *Weltwoche*, 415). In every case, though, in which the seventh thousand-year period as the “sabbath” is used in conjunction with a subsequent “eighth day,” the sabbath millennium refers to an intermediate kingdom followed by the eternal new creation. Thus, in a fragmentary commentary on Matthew, presumably from Victorinus of Pettau, we have a description of the “seventh day sabbath” millennial reign that follows Christ’s return (*Salvator ergo inpleto sexto millesimo anno venturus est, ut septimum millesimum annum hic regnet*). This is then followed by the release of Satan and his demons for a final judgment, which is then followed by the eighth day-millennium, in which all things are renewed and returned to God (*in octoadem omnia meliorabuntur reversa ad Deum*) (See Wikenhauser, *Weltwoche*, 403). In this scheme, *septimus vero, id est sabbatum, septimi millesimi umbra est, qui cessationem mundanis operibus futuram septimo millesimo anno incipiente significat* (“Indeed, the seventh, that is, the sabbath, is the shadow of the seventh millennium, which signifies the future cessation of worldly works in the beginning of the seventh thousand years”). However, *octavus autem dies, qui primus post sabbatum et ante sabbatum est, . . . hic ergo typum habet octoadis, quia omnia redeunt reformata ad Deum* (“The eighth day, which is both after and before the sabbath, . . . then, is a type of the octoad, because all things, being reformed, return to God”) (Wikenhauser, *Weltwoche*, 404). In no case is the eighth day referred to as a sabbath; only the seventh day is given this designation. In fact, not only is the eschatological “eighth day” not regarded as a fulfillment of the sabbath, when it is mentioned in an eschatological connection, it is rather regarded as the antitype of “circumcision.” Wikenhauser summarizes, “Manche [non-chiliasts] sprechen auch von der Ewigkeit als dem achten Tage und sehen in der Beschneidung am achten Tage das Vorbild” (*Weltwoche*, 416). Thus, in Jerome’s comments on Psalm 89 (*Epistle 140 Ad Cyprianum presbyterum*), we read: “*Quia mundus in sex diebus fabricatus est, sex millibus annorum tantum credatur subsistere et postea venire septenarium numerum et octonarium, in quo verus exercetur sabbatismus et circumcisionis puritas redditur*” (cited in Wikenhauser, *Weltwoche*, 410. Text available in Migne, *Patristica Latina* 22, 1172). This is important because we have been told by those who have rejected *Barnabas* 15 as

Furthermore, that the eschatological eighth day must chronologically follow the seventh day rather than concur with it is made clear by the practical implications the author draws from this eschatological scheme. The author concludes, “For this reason (διό) we also spend the eighth day in celebration (καὶ ἄγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ὀγδόην εἰς εὐφροσύνην), on which also Jesus rose from the dead and, being made manifest, ascended into heaven” (Barn. 15.9). The author is appealing to his eschatological scheme to explain why Christians celebrate (εὐφροσύνην) on Sunday rather than on the Jewish sabbath of Saturday. They do so because after the eschatological sabbath of a thousand years following the return of Christ, the world will have been renewed throughout that sabbath, resulting in an eschatological “eighth day,” which is another world—presumably an eternal day, though the text does not make this clear.

Just as the bodies of the saints had been made completely new when all lawlessness had been banished from their lives during the sabbath rest (Barn. 15.7), so also the whole world will be made new and all lawlessness utterly banished in the eighth day—the renewed world (Barn. 15.8; cf. Rom 8:19–23; Rev 21:1, 5). The author’s explanation for why Christians celebrate the eighth day (the day after the Jewish sabbath) rather than on the seventh day would fail in contradiction if his eschatological scheme collapsed the eschatological seventh and eighth days into one eternal day.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the author must be read as teaching an eschatological scheme in which a thousand-year period follows the second coming, which period will itself be followed by an “eighth” day of another world.<sup>34</sup>

In the eschatological expectation of *Barnabas*, while the resurrected, glorified saints will have been made able fully to rest and to make the sabbath holy, the rest of the world will still require renewal through its liberation from a bondage to corruption. This work of the seventh-day sabbath,

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presenting a chiliastic scheme, that the author of *Barnabas* indicates two sabbath days—the seventh and the eighth. Yet in fact he indicates no such thing. If the author of *Barnabas* were attempting to set forth an eschatology in which the seventh day was the eternal rest of the new creation, he should not have mentioned the eighth day at all. Because his polemical purpose was to demonstrate that the present sabbath observances of the Jews was a complete misunderstanding of the intention of the law, which was spiritual and eschatological, his point would have been made by simply explaining the typological nature of the sabbath as the eternal new creation. Rather, Barn. 15 presents the eighth day not as a sabbath but as the beginning of another world—the new creation, which fits comfortably in the typical premillennial and chiliastic scheme consistent with the world-week.

<sup>33</sup> Shea rightly observes: “The greatest reason against making the two days identical is the basic purpose of the chapter. If the future seventh and eighth days begin together (at the end of the sixth day) then so do the week days in this present age, and that leaves Christians keeping the seventh-day Sabbath which is exactly what the writer did not want, and against which he was writing. A distinction between the seventh and eighth days both present and future is vital to the author’s anti-Sabbatarian cause” (William H. Shea, “The Sabbath in the Epistle of Barnabas,” *AUSS* 4.2 [1966]: 168).

<sup>34</sup> Wikenhauser also acknowledges the problem with those who adopted the “Weltwoche” scheme without a seventh day sabbath of a thousand years: “Die Folgerichtigkeit liegt offensichtlich auf Seiten der Chiliasten. Ist die Schöpfungswoche mit sechs Arbeitstagen und einem Ruhetag der Typus der gesamten Dauer der geschaffenen Welt, so muß diese 6000 + 1000 Jahre dauern und dann ein Ende nehmen. Die Gegner des Chiliasmus gerieten beim Festhalten an der Weltwoche in gewisse Schwierigkeiten” (Wikenhauser, “Weltwoche und tausendjähriges Reich,” 415). Wikenhauser is correct that from the perspective of typology, a chiliastic scheme is a much better fit than the non-chiliastic approach, which is why non-chiliasts who still embraced the world-week chronology regarded the seventh-day sabbath as a symbol for the eternal new creation.

then, will be the beginning or starting-point for the new world, represented by the eighth day. This begins to explain why the author of *Barnabas* did not seem to have been too concerned that his quotation of the Old Testament suggested God both rested and finished his work “on the seventh day.” Instead of charging the author of *Barnabas* with inconsistency or sloppy use to traditional materials, perhaps he was actually presenting in short form a fairly well-developed eschatology of progressive cosmic renewal that would occur throughout the future millennial period, culminating in the new creation.<sup>35</sup>

### The Anachronistic Appeal to Clement of Alexandria

In his negative answer to the question of whether Barnabas was a chiliast, Ferguson appeals to Clement of Alexandria in order to place Barnabas in a non-chiliastic tradition rather than in the chiliastic tradition of fathers like Justin and Irenaeus.<sup>36</sup> Ferguson does not hide the fact that his reading of Clement’s treatment of the fourth commandment led him to his own conclusions regarding the conflation of the seventh and eighth days in Barnabas 15: “Indeed, it was reading Clement that led me to reexamine the passage in *Barnabas* and suggest another way of interpreting its author.”<sup>37</sup> He makes the case that in Clement of Alexandria we have early evidence of how Barnabas’s conflation of the seventh and eighth days—apparently seen clearly by Clement—were explained by the Alexandrian. Yet one could also argue that no such conflation or confusion of the seventh and eighth days in Barnabas 15 existed, but that Clement himself fashioned the conflation in order to accept the authority of Barnabas as apostolic while reinterpreting his millennialism through a clever and complicated form of exegesis. That is, Clement worked Barnabas 15 over until its millennial teachings were no longer visible under his creative interpretations. His exegesis did not uncover the true meaning of Barnabas 15; it purposely obscured it.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Rordorf grasps the broader early Jewish and Christian theological context of Barn. 15 well when he notes that in patristic writings “there are passages which refer to the future sabbath as the time of fulfilment when God will be all in all.... On the other hand, however, perhaps even more often we find a chiliastic idea of a preliminary golden age; this age would not be the end, but would last one thousand years and lead to the dawn of the new aeon. The millennium (not naturally understood as the reign of Jesus the Messiah) in this case corresponded to the seventh period of a thousand years, that is to say, to the cosmic sabbath; after that would follow the final golden age which came to be called by Christians the ‘eighth day’” (Rordorf, *Sunday*, 90–91).

<sup>36</sup> Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 165.

<sup>37</sup> Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 165. He is correct that Barnabas was held in high regard by Clement of Alexandria and the Alexandrian community for some time. Clement himself quoted Barnabas as authoritative Scripture, believing it to have been written by the “Apostle Barnabas” (Clem. *Strom.* 2.6 [Barn. 1]; 2.7 [Barn. 4]; 2.15 [Barn. 10]; 2.18 [Barn. 21]; 2.20 [Barn. 16]; 5.8 [Barn. 10]; 5.10 [Barn. 6]).

<sup>38</sup> In Clement’s *Stromata* 6.16, where he discusses the spiritual interpretation of the ten commandments, he spends most of his time explaining the significance of the fourth (the sabbath) for “knowing” or “knowledgeable”—“gnostic”—Christians. Though he refers to the eschatological sabbath in this connection, he does not actually refer to or cite Barn. 15 explicitly. This reluctance to cite *Barnabas* in his spiritual interpretation of the sabbath is somewhat surprising, considering Clement’s numerous previous appeals to *Barnabas* as an authoritative apostolic source. It is beyond doubt that Clement was aware of the content of Barn. 15. That Clement does not explicitly cite *Barnabas* in



In dealing with the proper “gnostic” interpretation of the decalogue (σαφήνειαν γνωστικὴν ἢ Δεκάλογος) in *Stromata* 6.16, Clement begins by employing symbolism for the significance of the number “ten.” With regard to the fourth commandment on the sabbath, Clement slows his otherwise rapid exposition of the decalogue to a crawl, spending more than twice as much time explaining the symbolism of the numbers and their spiritual significance than he did on all the rest of the decalogue combined. Bauckham explains, “[Clement’s] concern is neither with days of the week nor with physical rest. His declared purpose in expounding the Decalogue in *Str.* 6.16 was to provide an example of gnostic as opposed to literal exposition.”<sup>39</sup> Kalvesmaki writes, “When he arrives at the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy, Clement pursues a lengthy tangent, to discuss the relationship between the numbers six, seven, and eight.”<sup>40</sup>

A close and thorough exegesis of Clement’s spiritual interpretation of the numbers is beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>41</sup> However, a few matters must be highlighted with regard to Clement’s treatment of the sabbath commandment. First, Clement acknowledges that the command affirms that God created the world and gave humans the seventh day as a rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) because of the afflictions of this physical life (διὰ τὴν κατὰ τὸν βίον κακοπάθειαν). The “rest” has nothing to do with God himself needing rest from labor or suffering, but we “flesh-bearers” needing rest. It is clear up front that Clement first understands the command as having had—at least initially—a literal, this-worldly application. Yet in keeping with his pattern, he quickly moves from a literal interpretation to a spiritual interpretation. He notes, “The seventh day is proclaimed as a rest—an abstention from evils (ἀποχή κακῶν)—preparing for the primordial day (τὴν ἀρχέγονον ἡμέραν), which is our actual rest (τὴν τῷ ὄντι ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμῶν).” That is, because the days of the week restart after the seventh day, this “primordial day” that follows the sabbath as an abstention from evils prepares for a restart. This, then, allows Clement to draw from the first day of creation and the creation of light and the illumination of wisdom and knowledge, which then points to the “true light”—the Spirit of God and the sanctification by faith. At the conclusion of this flourish of interpretations, Clement concludes: “Therefore, following him through all of life (δι’ ὅλου τοῦ βίου) we become impassible (ἀπαθεῖς καθιστάμεθα), and this is to rest (τὸ δέ ἐστιν ἀναπαύσασθαι).” It seems, then, that at least as an initial interpretation, Clement regards the Christian application of the sabbath not as a literal day of rest, like the Jewish application, but as a present abstention from moral evils by the sanctifying power of the Spirit, all in anticipation of the eternal (heavenly?) rest when they experience impassibility. The “following him through all his

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support of his conflation of the seventh and eighth days—while expounding on the concept at length—may suggest that the treatment of the seventh and eighth days in *Barnabas* were not sufficiently clear for Clement’s purposes.

<sup>39</sup> Richard J. Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” in *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 276.

<sup>40</sup> Joel Kalvesmaki, *The Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in Platonism and Early Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013), 128.

<sup>41</sup> See Kalvesmaki’s chapter, “The Orthodox Possibilities of the Theology of Arithmetic: Clement of Alexandria” for a detailed exposition of Clement’s fantastic use of number symbolism (Kalvesmaki, *Theology of Arithmetic*, 125–151).

life” must refer to the present earthly reality of physical existence (τοῦ βίου), which will eventually give way to eternal life in another plane of existence. This, at least, is one of Clement’s interpretations—a spiritual, moral interpretation common among Valentinianism at the time.<sup>42</sup>

Yet Clement adds to this ethical application of the sabbath as a rest from wickedness the concept of eschatological rest, also common in Christian circles in the late second century, as evidenced by Barnabas and Irenaeus. Clement then launches into his long excursus on the relationship between the sixth, seventh, and eighth days of the creation week and their allegorical interpretation. At this point, Clement suggests that “the eighth may be properly the seventh, while the seventh appears as the sixth, and this is properly the sabbath, while the seventh is a [day] of work.” In other words, Clement is shifting the sabbath forward to the eighth day and regarding the seventh day as a day of labor. Clement’s complex and convoluted exposition then draws on a number of traditions regarding the numbers six, seven, and eight. He makes much of the fact that in the Greek numbering system, the character representing the number 6 is not the sixth number of the alphabet, *zeta*, but *digamma*, so the sixth letter, *zeta* represents the number 7, while the seventh letter, *eta*, represents 8. Bauckham notes, “The major theme of the complex allegorical treatment of the numbers six, seven, and eight...seems to be that through the knowledge of Christ, man, who was created on the sixth day, attains to the eschatological rest of the seventh and the divine fruition of the eighth.”<sup>43</sup> This provides Clement license to shift the eighth day to the seventh slot as the day of true rest while regarding the seventh day as a day of labor. The argument is, of course, obscure, except in the world of symbolic numbers in which Clement dwells. Yet Bauckham rightly identifies Clement’s motivation in the numerological conflation of the seventh and eighth: “The numerology is also designed to demonstrate the intimate relationship of the numbers seven and eight, for here as elsewhere (cf. *Stromata* 4:25) Clement seeks to unite the two concepts of rest, the church’s tradition of the eschatological, Sabbath rest and the Egyptian Valentinian tradition of the cosmological rest of the ogdoad.”<sup>44</sup> In Valentinianism, the hebdomad—the seventh heaven—is one plane of exaltation, while the ogdoad—the eighth—represents the highest plane.

Simply put, in *Stromata* 6.16, Clement of Alexandria is not providing his readers with a true exposition of Barnabas 15 in the Alexandrian tradition. Rather, Clement is attempting to harmonize three traditions regarding the sabbath by a fantastically convoluted and probably inconsistent exegesis—the eschatological interpretation of Barnabas 15, the moral/ethical interpretation of Hebrews 4:1–11, and the spiritual/heavenly interpretation of Valentinian Gnosticism.<sup>45</sup>

Ferguson’s defense of a non-chiliastic reading of *Barnabas* by appealing to Clement of Alexandria depends on a problem that does not really exist—an inconsistency in Barnabas 15 “in

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” 276-77.

<sup>43</sup> Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” 277.

<sup>44</sup> Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” 277.

<sup>45</sup> Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” 276-277.

combining two different eschatological schemes as if they were one.”<sup>46</sup> I have shown that this reading of Barnabas 15 is not only unnecessary but unlikely. Clement of Alexandria—not Barnabas—is the first to conflate the seventh and eighth days eschatologically. This leads to a major methodological flaw in Ferguson’s argument—reading Clement’s attempt at reconciling the eschatology of Barnabas 15 with the eschatology of Valentinian Gnosticism backward into Barnabas 15. Another perplexing problem with using Clement of Alexandria as the interpretive key for a non-chilastic reading of Barnabas 15 presents itself. Clement quotes repeatedly from Barnabas as an authoritative apostolic writing throughout the *Stromata*, especially the author’s spiritual interpretation of the Law. Why, then, does Clement not directly refer to Barnabas 15 in *Stromata* 6.16 in his true interpretation of the sabbath for the gnostic Christian? In light of these facts, it is best to see Clement attempting to rehabilitate Barnabas 15 of its obvious chiliasm without directly engaging the text of *Barnabas* itself. The fact is, Clement of Alexandria, almost certainly a non-chilist, spends a considerable amount of time attempting to demonstrate how “seven” and “eight” can refer to the same period of time. This fanciful exegesis and argumentation fall short.

Instead of appealing to the later reinterpretation of the seventh and eighth days by Clement of Alexandria, the eschatological scheme actually presented by the author of *Barnabas* better aligns with that found in the first-century Slavonic *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, or, more commonly, 2 Enoch.<sup>47</sup> There we read, “And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first-created after my work, and that *the first seven* revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours” (2 En. 33.1–2).<sup>48</sup> *Second Enoch* was likely composed in the first century, perhaps in Egypt.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it probably predates the comments

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<sup>46</sup> Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 167.

<sup>47</sup> 2 Enoch was likely composed in the first century, perhaps in Egypt. Thus, it probably predates the comments of Barn. 15 or represents a contemporary parallel to its ideas of the millennium. Angelo O’Hagan summarizes the broader Jewish eschatological thinking current during the time between the testaments: “The simplest practical solution was to postulate an interim period of national glory in the last days before the final era was really inaugurated. The older tradition had thought of the coming of the Messiah as the initiation of the ultimate age. Under the influence, however, of more individual notions of reward this position had to be altered. The tendency was towards a compromise in which the age of the Messiah was not strictly final: it was to be limited as an earthly phenomenon. The limits were naturally a matter of much dispute, but whether the figure set was forty, a thousand or seven thousand, the world to come was to break through only after this interposed period was completed. Then only was the final judgment, the Day of the Lord, to take place, and then too the ultimate changing of the cosmos” (Angelo O’Hagan, *Material Re-Creation in the Apostolic Fathers*, TUGAL, vol. 100 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968), 31–32). O’Hagan cites examples from 2 Bar. 30, Sib.Or. 3.652–670; Rev 20; 1 En. 91.12, 16–17 as well as 4 Esd. 7.31, 75, 113, also noting *Testament of Abraham* 13. O’Hagan himself notes this is an “oversimplification,” asserting that the literature of the first century and beyond is marked by confusion and contradiction (O’Hagan, *Material Re-Creation*, 32).

<sup>48</sup> Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2: 451.

<sup>49</sup> See Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2: 425. More recently, see arguments in Christfried Böttrich, “The ‘Book of the Secrets of Enoch’ (2 EN): Between Jewish Origin and Christian Transmission. An Overview,” in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 52–59. Regarding provenance, Böttrich notes, “A majority of scholars rightly tends to locate the original of Greek 2 Enoch in the important Jewish metropolis of Alexandria. There seems to be no serious alternative to such a locale” (Böttrich, “The ‘Book of the Secrets of Enoch,’” 58–59). Navtanovich concurs, adding, “The discovery of the Coptic

of Barnabas 15 or may even represent a contemporary parallel to its ideas of the millennium. It seems from a sound methodological perspective, reading Barnabas 15 in light of the near-contemporary background of 2 Enoch makes more sense that reading Barnabas 15 in light of later comments by Clement of Alexandria nearly a century later. To me, this seems self-evident, especially given Clement's motivation to reinterpret the assertions of Barnabas 15 in light of his non-chilastic eschatology.

If we were to explore other early interpretations of Barnabas 15 (or if not interpretations of *Barnabas* itself, at least other early eschatological readings of the creation week) we would discover the fathers of the second and third centuries understood the typology in ways far different from Clement's. Following a common tradition among premillennialists before him, Hippolytus reckons the history of the world in terms of thousand-year periods, estimating that his own day was nearing the end of the six thousand years.<sup>50</sup> He writes, "And 6,000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day 'on which God rested from all His works.' For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they 'shall reign with Christ,' when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse: for 'a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.' Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that 6,000 years must be fulfilled. And they are not yet fulfilled, as John says: 'five are fallen; one is,' that is, the sixth; 'the other is not yet come'" (Hippolytus, *On Daniel* 2.4 [ANF 5]). Despite what many regard as a desperate and absurd typology of the six days of creation, one thing is

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fragments in the region of Egyptian Nubia appears to support this possibility" (Liudmila Navtanovich, "The Provenance of 2 Enoch: A Philological Perspective. A Response to C. Böttrich's Paper "The "Book of the Secrets of Enoch" (2 EN): Between Jewish Origin and Christian Transmission. An Overview,"" in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini [Leiden: Brill, 2012], 80). See also Andrei A. Orlov, "The Sacerdotal Traditions of 2 Enoch and the Date of the Text," in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 116.

<sup>50</sup> The first step in describing the eschatology of Hippolytus of Rome is to determine Hippolytus's authentic writings from which to draw this eschatological outlook. This process is complicated by the controversy surrounding Hippolytus in contemporary scholarship. For a history of historical-critical debate surrounding Hippolytus, see David Dunbar, "The Problem of Hippolytus of Rome: A Study in Historical-Critical Reconstruction," *JETS* 25/1 (1982): 63–74. For a good overview of views on authorship of extant texts, see T. C. Schmidt, *Hippolytus of Rome: Commentary on Daniel and 'Chronicon'*, Gorgias Studies in Early Christianity and Patristics, vol. 67 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2017), 2–7. The fourth-century historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, provides this list of Hippolytus's works, which he himself concedes is merely a partial list: "Of his other treatises the following have reached us: *On the Hexaëmeron*, *On what followed the Hexaëmeron*, *Against Marcion*, *On the Song*, *On Parts of Esekiel*, *On the Pascha*, *Against All the Heresies*; and very many others also might be found preserved by many people" (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History* 6.22.1–2. Translation from *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 2, LCL [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926–1932], 69). In the fifth century, Jerome supplements this partial list with *On the Six Days of Creation*, *On Exodus*, *On the Song of Songs*, *On Genesis*, *On Zechariah*, *On the Psalms*, *On Isaiah*, *On Daniel*, *On the Apocalypse*, *On the Proverbs*, *On Ecclesiastes*, *On Saul*, *On the Pythonissa*, *On the Antichrist*, *On the resurrection*, *Against Marcion*, *On the Passover*, *Against all heresies*, and an exhortation *On the praise of our Lord and Saviour* (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 61). Though *Refutation of All Heresies* is anonymous, I regard Hippolytus as its author, along with many others (Dunbar, "The Problem of Hippolytus of Rome," 66). His commentary on Daniel, written around AD 204 in Rome, I also regard as authentic. See W. Brian Shelton, *Martyrdom from Exegesis in Hippolytus: An Early Church Presbyter's Commentary on Daniel*, Paternoster Studies in Christian History and Thought (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 1–21; Schmidt, *Hippolytus of Rome*, 8–9

certain: Hippolytus believed the seventh day Sabbath rest in Genesis 1 was a type of the coming seven-thousandth-year period of the kingdom on earth, which is the period referred to by John in the Apocalypse—obviously the millennium of Revelation 20. Thus, Hippolytus was both a futurist and premillennialist in his eschatology.

This characterization of Hippolytus’s millennialism has been challenged. After acknowledging that “the six days prior to the first Sabbath represent the time on earth before the kingdom of the saints commences,” Schmidt asserts, “Nowhere in his *Commentary on Daniel* does Hippolytus specify whether he believes in a literal millennial reign of Christ after the 6000 years are completed, but he does believe that when Jesus returns he will usher in an ‘eternal kingdom’ and ‘consume’ all of those who oppose him ‘in an eternal fire’ (4.14.3). This seems to leave little room for a millennial kingdom and a renewed battle with evil.”<sup>51</sup> But this interpretation is based on a false choice, as if Hippolytus (and, indeed, millennialists in general) must hold *either* that the reign of Christ with his saints is only 1000 years *or* that the reign of Christ with his saints is eternal. This dichotomy is absurd. It has always been the view of classic (Irenaeus) premillennialism that the reign of Christ with his saints was eternal, but that the first 1000 years of that eternal reign had unique characteristics as a transition period between the first and second resurrection as well as the period of the redemption and transformation of the creation.<sup>52</sup> It is therefore a *non sequitur* to argue that Hippolytus’s reference to an eternal kingdom leaves “little room” for a literal thousand-year kingdom as the first thousand years of an eternal kingdom of Christ and his saints. It is far more likely that Hippolytus meant to extend the literal chronological reckoning of the six thousand years of creation to the seventh thousand-year period in the future, and thus conceive of a millennial period that commences the eternal reign of Christ—as in Justin and Irenaeus. Because he took the first six thousand years since creation literally, there is no reason to assume Hippolytus would take the seventh thousand-year period as a figure for an eternal kingdom. That the future sabbath rest could refer to an eternal heavenly kingdom is an impossible interpretation of Hippolytus’s language, especially in light of both his predecessors and contemporaries who have a similar typological interpretation of the seven-thousandth year of history as the future millennial reign. What Hippolytus does not do, though, is speculate about the details of this period—merely that Christ’s kingdom will be present on earth and the saints will rule with him.

In his commentary on Genesis, Hippolytus makes the following assertion based on a rather allegorical reading of Old Testament figures: “The word of God here is the promise anew of the

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<sup>51</sup> Schmidt, *Hippolytus of Rome*, 18, 19.

<sup>52</sup> So, for example, Irenaeus writes, “Therefore the great God showed future things by Daniel, and confirmed them by His Son; and...Christ is the stone which is cut out without hands, who shall destroy temporal kingdoms, and introduce an eternal one, which is the resurrection of the just” (*Haer.* 5.26.2; cf. 5.30.4, 5.32.1). Likewise, Justin Martyr—whose millennialism is uncontested—spoke of the eternal kingdom: “He [Christ] shall raise all men from the dead, and appoint some to be incorruptible, immortal, and free from sorrow in the everlasting and imperishable kingdom; but shall send others away to the everlasting punishment of fire” (*Dial.* 117; cf. 34, 46, 76, 120). In the very same work he also refers to the thousand-year kingdom: “But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare” (*Dial.* 80).

blessing and the hope of a kingdom to come, in which the saints shall reign with Christ, and keep the true Sabbath” (Hippolytus, *Commentary on Genesis* [ANF 5]). This is in keeping with the treatment of the future millennium as a fulfillment of the Sabbath typology in Barnabas 15. In his commentary on Daniel, Hippolytus notes that those who “survive [the Antichrist’s] days”—that is, the survivors of his great persecution during the second half of the tribulation—“to him the kingdom of heaven comes....the saints shall inherit the kingdom along with Christ” (Hippolytus, *On Daniel* 2.40 [ANF 5]). This “kingdom of heaven” inherited by the saints, then, is none other than the millennial earthly kingdom that arrives with the return of Christ.

Hippolytus’s predecessor, Irenaeus also ties the fulfillment of the blessings of the kingdom to the time of the millennial reign: “For what are the hundred-fold [rewards] in this word [Matt 19:29], the entertainments given to the poor, and the suppers for which a return is made? These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes” (*Haer.* 5.33.2).

Irenaeus interprets the six days of creation as both a historical account of the creation as well as a prophecy of the six thousand years of history, noting that all things will come to an end after six thousand years (*Haer.* 5.28.3). And that seventh thousand-year period will come after the destruction of the antichrist figure, similar to Barnabas 15: “But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that ‘many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’” (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.30.4).

In short, the premillennial and chiliastic reading of Barnabas 15 fits well in the context of other early fathers who saw the future seventh-day eschatological sabbath as the period during which the world would be glorified and perfected, ushering in the eternal new creation.

### Evaluation of Non-Chiliastic Interpretations of *Barnabas* 15

At this point, several commentators, bucking at the notion that the author of *Barnabas* was a chiliast, make numerous rebuttable assertions regarding the passage. Ferguson suggests, “The important point for our purposes is the shift from the seventh to the eighth day to describe this eschatological rest.”<sup>53</sup> However, the text does not actually assign “sabbath” or “rest” to the eighth day. This was also the assertion by Albert Hermans. The only day of sabbath in this text is the

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<sup>53</sup> Everett Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 162.

seventh (Barn. 15.5). As we have shown above, *Barn.* 15.8 does not, in fact, assert that the eighth day is the sabbath which God has made, but the outcome of the conditions prevailing upon the world during the seventh day. Ferguson also asserts that the author of *Barnabas* “takes the eighth day instead of the seventh day as representative of the world to come.”<sup>54</sup> Again, this is a misrepresentation of what the passage actually says. The author’s logic is that the seventh day sabbath is the means by which or during which “after causing everything to rest, I will make a beginning of an eighth day, which is a beginning of another world” (Barn. 15.8).

Similarly, C. K. Barrett alleges the author of *Barnabas* presents a confusing, contradictory eschatological scheme by introducing the notion of the eighth day to an otherwise pedestrian presentation of the seventh thousand-year “sabbath.” He writes, “This leads him to include the explicit statement that the eighth day is the beginning of a new world, and if by this he means the eighth millennium what he says here is inconsistent with what he says in xv. 5–7, where the Sabbatical millennium in which sin is overcome is the seventh.”<sup>55</sup>

Paget follows Barrett in this same estimation,<sup>56</sup> noting that Barnabas “claims that the eighth day is the beginning of the final end, and if by this he refers to the eighth millenium [*sic*] then this is inconsistent with what he has written in vv.3f. where it is the end of the sixth millenium that constitutes the beginning of the final end.”<sup>57</sup> Likewise, Prigent suggests, “Cette fois c’est le huitième et non le septième jour qui est type du monde nouveau.”<sup>58</sup> However, these charges of inconsistency are only sustained if the author of *Barnabas* were indicating a cosmic rather than personal transformation in 15.7. As has been argued, the author intended the language of 15.7 to refer to personal transformation through resurrection, enabling a person to keep the sabbath; thus, 15.8 refers to universal or cosmic renewal and restoration, accomplished by the activities that will take place during the eschatological sabbath. Albert Hermans even translates καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα not as “after causing everything to rest” but as “mettant fin à l’univers” (“putting an end to the universe”),<sup>59</sup> suggesting a total annihilation to make way for a new world, which misleadingly suggests a concurrence of the events of Christ’s coming at the close of the 6000-year period and the commencement of the sabbath. The confusion is not in the text itself but in the translation and interpretation. Herman’s entire arguments rests on this assertion that Barnabas 15 presents two eschatological sabbaths: “Contrairement à l’interprétation millénariste courante [i.e., in Herman’s day], nous excluons une succession de deux sabbats eschatologiques.”<sup>60</sup> And rightly so! Barnabas

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<sup>54</sup> Ferguson, “Was Barnabas a Chiliast?,” 162.

<sup>55</sup> Barrett, “Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 370. Though Barrett points out this apparent inconsistency, he does not make much of it. Rather, he concludes, “Notwithstanding the confusion introduced by the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath it is clear that Barnabas’ real view was that he and his contemporaries stood within the 6000 years, still waiting for the Son of God to usher in the millennial period with heavenly signs and portents” (371).

<sup>56</sup> And quotes Windisch, *Barnabasbrief*, 384.

<sup>57</sup> Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 170.

<sup>58</sup> “This time it is the eighth and not the seventh day that is typical of the new world” (Prigent, *L’Épître de Barnabé*, 69).

<sup>59</sup> Hermans, “Le Pseudo-Barnabé,” 851.

<sup>60</sup> Hermans, “Le Pseudo-Barnabé,” 853.

15 presents only one sabbath—the seventh-thousand-year period, which accomplishes and makes way for “another world,” not “another sabbath.” Rordorf reads the text correctly: “In v. 8 the seventh millennium is unambiguously followed by the eighth day, the new aeon.”<sup>61</sup> Frankly, Hermans and many others have been misled by a careless exegesis of the text, perhaps relying on translations rather than the grammar and syntax of the actual text.

Many have uncritically accepted Hermans’ exegetically lean treatment of Barnabas 15.<sup>62</sup> Andrew Chester simply seems to assume *Barnabas* presents “two distinct eschatological sabbaths” or “the seventh and eighth days, the first and second sabbaths,” noting that the general strength of Hermans’ argument given “the introduction of the eighth day and second sabbath,” which clouds an otherwise clear chiasm.<sup>63</sup> Yet this assumption of a “second sabbath” is simply not found in the text. The fact remains, despite repeated assertions to the contrary, Barnabas 15 only refers to the seventh day as “the sabbath” or time of “rest.” The only description given to the eighth day is “another world” (15.8). The conclusion that *Barnabas* assigns the new creation to both the commencement of the seventh day and eighth day depends entirely on the assumptions that 1) the changing of the sun, moon, and stars is a reference to their transformation in cosmic renewal rather than the cosmic signs related to the Day of the Lord judgment; and 2) “all things being made new by the Lord” refers to cosmic renewal rather than personal glorification by resurrection. Deprived of these two assumptions, which are not exegetically necessary nor even, I have argued, exegetically likely, the text remains both premillennial and chiliastic. Though Chester asserts that “Hermans provides detailed exegesis and argues the strongest conceivable case for this view,” he is himself not entirely convinced that Hermans’ reading is as clear as many seem to have taken it.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, simply citing Hermans, J. Webb Mealy notes: “For Barnabas, the seventh millennial day (reckoned in terms of the present creation) begins at the parousia, and is at the same time the inauguration of the eighth day of God’s new creation.”<sup>65</sup> Mealy suggest Hermans “builds an extremely thorough case for the identification of the sabbath and the eighth day of the new world.”<sup>66</sup> So, with a number of modern scholars since Hermans, Mealy accepts the conclusion that in the reckoning of the author of *Barnabas* “the seventh and eighth millennia *overlap one another*.”<sup>67</sup> Mealy does, however, provide a corrective to what he sees as an overstatement in Hermans, noting: “Agreed, Barnabas is no chiliast in the typical sense, for this millennium belongs completely to the new creation. But what Hermans does not appear to have considered is the concept of a distinct millennium beginning at the Parousia, set in the new creation, and bounded

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<sup>61</sup> Rordorf, *Sunday*, 93.

<sup>62</sup> However, many others, perhaps equally uncritically, have retained the older interpretation of Barnabas as a chiliast. See Michael J. St. Clar, *Millenarian Movements in Historical Context*, Garland Reference Library of Social Science, vol. 763 (New York: Garland, 1992), 77.

<sup>63</sup> Andrew Chester, “The Parting of the Ways: Eschatology and Messianic Hope,” in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways AD 70-135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, WUNT, vol. 66 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 274–275.

<sup>64</sup> Chester, “Parting of the Ways,” 275.

<sup>65</sup> Mealy, *After the Thousand Years*, 48n2.

<sup>66</sup> Mealy, *After the Thousand Years*, 48n2.

<sup>67</sup> Mealy, *After the Thousand Years*, 48n2.



by the resurrection and judgment of unrepentant humanity.”<sup>68</sup> This is, in fact, what Barnabas seems to present. I have argued that he does not conflate the seventh and eighth days, but neither does Barnabas separate them. The seventh day is distinct but not separate from the eighth. It is truly the inauguration and beginning of the new creation in the sense that it involves the work of renewing creation; the effect of this renewal, then, is the eighth day of the new world. We have with Barnabas 15 not an either/or scenario in which the seventh day is either the new creation or merely an intermediate step between the old and new; rather, it is both a step toward the new creation and—to the degree in which the new creation is progressively realized in the world throughout the thousand-year sabbath and mediation of the resurrected saints—a realization of new creation.

Bauckham also presents a reading of Barnabas 15 that alleges a conflation of the seventh and eighth days due to a superficial treatment of the language and syntax of the passage: “This present world, which is the time of the ‘lawless one’ (ὁ ἄνομος), is contrasted with the coming new world, from which ‘lawlessness’ (ἡ ἀνομία) will have been eliminated.”<sup>69</sup> Note that without any exegetical validation, Bauckham assumes ὁ ἄνομος refers to the whole of human history rather than to the coming lawless one (see exegesis above). He also describes the events of the second coming as themselves ushering in the “new world,” likely referring to Barnabas 15.7. However, these participles, it has been shown, are connected to the condition of the saints in their immortal state during the millennial sabbath, not directly to the cosmos itself. Bauckham then hastily concludes, “God will bring this world to an end at the Parousia (the end of its six millennia) and inaugurate the new world.”<sup>70</sup> Again, this is a misleading presentation of the content of Barnabas 15. While we have said that the thousand-year sabbath can be regarded as the eschatological commencement of the new world in the sense that the world will be in process of renewal during that time, a careful reading of *Barnabas* has the “other world” following the completion of this renewal. *Barnabas* does not conflate the two. Bauckham also misreads Barnabas 15.8, where God declares that the present (Jewish) sabbaths are not acceptable to him, but the one which he has made—not a reference to the eighth day, the beginning of a new world, but to the seventh day by which God, by setting everything at rest, affects the commencement of the eighth: “by which, after causing everything to rest (ἐν ᾧ καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα), I will make a beginning of an eighth day (ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδότης ποιήσω), which is a beginning of another world (ὃ ἐστὶν ἄλλου κόσμου ἀρχὴν)” (Barn. 15.8). Even if Barnabas were using καταπαύσας to refer to the cessation of sin during the six thousand years, the “sabbath” itself that results is described not as the eighth day, but as the ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδότης, that is, the beginning or origin of the eighth day. Once again, had the author of *Barnabas* intended to equate the sabbath and eighth days, he should have written, ἐν ᾧ καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα ποιήσω ἡμέραν ὀγδότης, ὃ ἐστὶν ἄλλου κόσμου ἀρχὴν (“in which, after setting everything at rest, I will make the eighth day, which is the beginning of another world”). That would have clearly established the eighth day as conflated with the sabbath rest. Thus, it seems best to interpret καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα

<sup>68</sup> Mealy, *After the Thousand Years*, 48n2.

<sup>69</sup> Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” 262.

<sup>70</sup> Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” 262.

as a reference to events that take place on the sabbath rest of the world following the return of Christ, which itself then becomes the source and origin of the ultimate new world, *a result of the sabbath*.<sup>71</sup>

In 1945, Kromminga wrote regarding Barnabas, “To my mind the claim that he was a chiliast is quite baseless.”<sup>72</sup> At the end of that paragraph, he tempers his rhetoric a bit and lands on “to say the least, the evidence is insufficient.”<sup>73</sup> And later, after rejecting a postmillennial interpretation of Barnabas 15, he relents considerably, noting, “If we wish to save Barnabas for chiliasm, we shall have to try to understand him as a Premillenarian, and perhaps the Premillenarians of today are right in claiming him.”<sup>74</sup> The space between “quite baseless,” “insufficient,” and “perhaps...[they] are right” seems vast from an evidentiary perspective, but the real question is: upon what does Kromminga rest his strong objection to the chiliastic interpretation of Barnabas 15? Kromminga first objects to a premillennial interpretation by pointing out the elements missing from that chapter: the release of Satan at the end of the millennium, the resulting battle of Mog and Magog, and the reference to the judgment of the ungodly and cosmic changes related with the beginning of the “seventh day”; instead, Kromminga urges, premillennialists place the resurrection of the believers at the start of the millennium and judgment of the wicked at the end.<sup>75</sup> Importantly, he interprets the cosmic changes described in Barnabas 15.5 as the renewal of creation: “Furthermore, unless we understand the change of the sun, moon, and stars otherwise, the great cosmic change also comes after the millennium as conceived of by the Premillenarians and not at its beginning.”<sup>76</sup> In response to these specific grounds for a non-Premillennial reading of Barnabas 15, however, we have argued above that the acts associated with Christ’s second coming after the 6000-year period involve not the destruction of Satan but the abolition of the season of the antichrist; not the resurrection of the wicked unto judgment but the judgment of the wicked in this world who are in solidarity with the antichrist; and not the positive transformation of the cosmos through a regeneration of creation but the eschatological judgment of the sun, moon, and stars in connection with the Old Testament Day of the Lord (see above comments on Barn. 15.5).

By interpreting the language of the perfection of the resurrected saints primarily in cosmic rather than in individual terms, Kromminga conflates this resurrected glory at the beginning of the millennium with the cosmic glory of the renewed creation at the beginning of the “other world” (Barn. 15.7-8). On this basis alone, Kromminga boldly asserts, “He seems to be of the opinion, that there will be a seventh world-period all right, but that that period will be identical with the perfection of the eternal state. There can be no doubt about the identity of his seventh and his eighth day.”<sup>77</sup> This is certainly an overstatement of a most misleading kind, because we have shown

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<sup>71</sup> Lookadoo similarly follows Bauckham’s misreading of this passage. See Lookadoo, *Epistle of Barnabas*, 113.

<sup>72</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 30.

<sup>73</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 30.

<sup>74</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 32.

<sup>75</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 32.

<sup>76</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 32.

<sup>77</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 35.

that there is definitely room for doubt regarding the identification of the events related to the beginning of the “seventh day” and the conditions that lead to the beginning of the “eighth day.” Taking away this questionable foundation of Kromminga’s “perfectly plain” reading of Barnabas as “what we nowadays call an Amillennialist,”<sup>78</sup> we must default to the classic reading of Barnabas 15 as a variety of ancient premillennialism. Kromminga also makes the peculiar argument that Barnabas could not be a premillennialist because of his anti-Judaism.<sup>79</sup> The fact is that had Barnabas received his eschatological orientation from first-generation Apostles or apostolic teachers, and that eschatology was premillennial in outline, his anti-Judaism would have simply shifted his millennialism away from a Jerusalem-centered chiliasm that focused on a restoration of Israel to its land to a more cosmic-oriented chiliasm that emphasized the renewal of creation in keeping with Romans 8.

Kromminga’s labored attention to Barnabas’s anti-judaism and application of Old Testament promises of Israel to Christians does nothing to derail a premillennial orientation in Barnabas 15; it only serves to change the sort of premillennial outlook the author was propounding.<sup>80</sup> The spiritual application of Old Testament promises to Christians in the present age was not the sole provenance of amillennialists in the early church; classic premillennialists like Justin and Irenaeus also made this hermeneutical move without necessarily ruling out a future literal fulfillment. Thus, Kromminga’s attempts at casting the author of *Barnabas* as the father of amillennialism is simply wrong.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, Kromminga concludes his mistreatment of Barnabas 15 with the startling claim, “The fact remains beyond dispute, that in Barnabas we have a very early amillennial type of eschatology as early as any chiliasm can be shown to have appeared in the ancient Church.”<sup>82</sup> In light of the detailed analysis of *Barnabas* 15 in this paper, such a claim sounds absurd, and Kromminga’s conclusions can only have been accepted by those already disposed to embrace any position that would advantage amillennialism and disadvantage premillennialism. The fact is—and this is in truth beyond dispute—Barnabas 15 by every reading explicitly excludes both postmillennial and amillennial interpretations, as it presents the seventh 1000-year period as following, not preceding, the Parousia that destroys the season of the lawless one. In both amillennialism and postmillennialism the Parousia follows the millennial epoch, which cannot be

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<sup>78</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 33. The problematic claim that “this is plain and pure Amillennialism” (36) seems to jettison the commonly accepted definition of amillennialism. The amillennial position has always taught that the millennial period described in Revelation 20 is a present reality either in heaven with Christ’s reign since his enthronement at the ascension or the realization of that spiritual reign in the hearts and lives of the saints in his church on earth. In any case, amillennialism has always taught that the millennial reign precedes—it *does not follow*—his return as judge. In contrast, *Barnabas* 15 teaches that the events of the future seventh and eighth days—even if we accept the interpretation that these should be regarded as coterminous—*follow* the Parousia of the Lord. Even if everything Kromminga asserts regarding the language and imagery were true, this would still not be amillennialism in any of its forms. At most it would be post-advent new creationism in which the future “millennium” is an image of the renewed creation the follows the return of Christ.

<sup>79</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 33.

<sup>80</sup> See Kromminga, *Millennium*, 36. Even so, Kromminga’s treatment assumes an either/or approach

<sup>81</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 36-39.

<sup>82</sup> Kromminga, *Millennium*, 40.

conflated with the eternal state but is decisively separated from it by the return of Christ. All his bluster notwithstanding, Kromminga's claims are demonstrably false.