

The Function of Monstrous Beasts in Visionary Experiences:

Understanding Beasts in Early Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Literature

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1. Introduction

In the early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple Period, monstrous beasts appear in various types of visionary experiences.¹⁾ Some beasts are imaginary and possess unknown forms, and others are uncanny beasts with specified combinations of bestial figures and human traits. This paper aims to unfold the contribution of the dream-vision narratives of beasts to early apocalyptic literature,²⁾ namely in Daniel,

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1) Throughout the paper, the 'experience' is understood as an experience of real life in the literature unless otherwise mentioned. Concerning the effort to divide the dream experience into more detailed categories, see Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 22-26.

2) In the paper, my focus lies on the stories of those who encounter monstrous beasts in dream vision in particular. So, the book of Revelation is excluded because John of Patmos received the visions through direct divine appearance. Concerning the definition of the 'apocalypse,' I follow Cross suggestion. He writes, "I will not use the term as an adjective confined to the genre of the apocalypse. ... We need a term to apply to movements of several centuries

the Animal Apocalypse, 4 Ezra, and the Shepherd of Hermas.³⁾ Based on the literary and rhetorical analysis of selected apocalyptic sources, I argue that the images of the monstrous beasts reveal the dreamer's personal crisis, depression, anxieties, perplexity and fear.

For this, I present a theoretical overview of the ancient attitude towards dreams in the Hebrew Bible as describing the thematic backdrop of early apocalyptic literature. I contend that the occurrence of the monstrous beasts in the early Jewish and Christian literature represents a divine and revelatory message granted only to the elect and wise.

Then, I present literary analysis of some selected passages from the early apocalyptic literature referring to the image of the monstrous beasts in the dream-vision. And, I focus on unfolding how the illustrations of the monstrous beasts in the dream reports affect the narratives and the narrators' emotions through examining the beasts' appearances and activities.

Finally, while unfolding the commonality and particularity embedded in the literary functions and characters, I argue that they represent the other, conceptualizing the dreamer's enemies as well as distort the order of creation. This research presents that the apocalyptic sources examined in this paper do not simply provide access to the individual's report about the visionary experiences, but also reveal the time, emotion, and place in which the authors wrote these narratives.⁴⁾

which combined certain figures of wisdom and late prophetic eschatology in a new synthesis, ... The apocalypse was at home in this movement, a charismatic genre, and serves as a good tag for movement, but should not be made the defining or limiting genre. ... The apocalyptic movement may be succinctly described as the late Jewish attempt to revive Old Testament doctrines of history." See, Frank Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 68. 3f.

3) For the translation of Bible and Apocryphal books, I will consult NRSV unless otherwise mentioned.

2. The Ancient Attitude towards Dreams

In the ancient world dreams were not only a key to unlock secrets and esoteric messages, but also interpreted as prophetic initiations and divine messages.⁵⁾ Oppenheim observed some remarkable commonalities in the formal presentation of ancient dreams and presented four main elements that formulate the “dream frame.” These include: (i) a basic introduction about the dreamer, (ii) information regarding the place and circumstance of the dream, (iii) the content of the episode itself, and (iv) a formal closure of the account, referring to the dreamer’s reaction and/or fulfillment of the dream in waking reality.⁶⁾ In spite of the convenient dream frame categories, the question remains of whether actual dream experiences gave rise to recognizable literary forms or rather if the stylized literary expression of experiences was the result of cultural conditioning.⁷⁾

In terms of literary and rhetorical convention, one would expect writers to portray literary dreams in a way that approxi-

4) Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4.

5) James R. Lewis, and Evelyn Dorothy Oliver, *Dream Encyclopedia* (Canton: Visible Ink Press, 2009), 29-30.

6) A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 186-192.

7) For an example of the problem, in the *Proof of Heaven*, the author was never religious nor educated under any religious tradition and presents his tour to the heaven based on his own personal experiences. The problem of this sort of book is that it does not consider the fact that the author, as a white, Caucasian American, has may have come under the influence of a religious tradition whether he believes in it or not. See, EbenAlexander, *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012). And, concerning the analysis of Oppenheim’s theory about the dream, see Kelly Bulkeley, *Visions of the Night: Dreams, Religion, and Psychology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 78-86.

mated their imagined audiences' experiences of dream-vision phenomena and/or their familiarity with the presentation of such experiences in other literatures. Husser provided a method to negotiate the problem: "[w]e may conclude that if certain practices or institutions were responsible for bringing to birth these literary forms, the authors who used them do so in order to evoke a variety of oneiric experiences, experiences sometimes quite different from those that originally served as model."⁸⁾ In the case of the first, God directly speaks to Jacob through a dream in Gen 28:12-15;

And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring ... Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

In the passage, Jacob saw the divine presence and was granted the divine promise for his future. In this respect, the dream functions as a divine manifestation and revelation to Jacob.⁹⁾ Likewise, Philo interprets this dream story as a divine "oracle" to support the soul devoted to the practice of virtue and to clarify "who is the Lord and God of the universe" (On Dreams 1. 159).¹⁰⁾

Joseph demonstrates his divine and elect status as the dream

8) Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 101, italics original.

9) Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis: Translated and Interpreted by Hermann Gunkel*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 311.

10) Philo, *On Dreams*, vol. V. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 381.

interpreter through interpreting Pharaoh's dream in Genesis chapter 41:1-8;

After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, and there came up out of the Nile seven sleek and fat cows, and they grazed in the reed grass. Then seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. The ugly and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke. Then he fell asleep and dreamed a second time; seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. Then seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them. The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. Pharaoh awoke, and it was a dream.

In chapter 41, Pharaoh's dream was not interpreted until God's elect, Joseph, appeared. Joseph was aware that the dream was a divine message (Gen 41:28, "It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do"). Daniel chapter 2 is similar, as no one interprets the King's dream until Daniel does so after he is granted a night vision (Dan 2:19). Daniel is also aware of the King's dream as a divine message (Dan 2:28).¹¹⁾ Furthermore, the dream narratives in Genesis 41 and Daniel 2 both attribute the origin of the dream to God and frame the dream as an initial prophecy to be fulfilled at the end of each story (Gen 42:6).¹²⁾

In addition to these dream stories, Joseph's dream (Gen 37:6-9) also demonstrates the role of the dream as a prophecy. Unlike Genesis chapter 41 and Daniel chapter 2 which both offer the interpretation of the dreams, Joseph does not present

11) "...there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has disclosed to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at the end of days" (Dan 2:28)

12) Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, Translated by John H. Marks, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 347.

any interpretation in detail while implying future events. Joseph's dream does not only serve to solicit his brothers' hostility, but also indicates the resolution of crisis that his brothers will encounter (Gen 41:57, "the famine became severe throughout the world").¹³⁾ In particular, the verb 'to bow down' in the dream narrative occurs three times (Gen 37:7, 9, 10), which irritates the brothers. However, the brothers eventually go down to Egypt due to the famine and bow down to Joseph in order to buy some grain (Gen 42:5-6).

In sum, biblical dreams in the Hebrew bible were interpreted as revelatory messages and wisdom from God given to the elect. The dream was given to noble people like kings, officials, and patriarchs and the meaning of the dream was reserved only for the few (and only for males). The dream was a symbol of God's special care and attention for individual male heroes like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Daniel.¹⁴⁾ The dreamers of the Hebrew bible, in contrast to other Near Eastern groups who believed in various gods, retained the monotheistic belief and as such interpreted dreams to be the revelation of the one God in which they believed.

3. The Appearances of Monstrous Beasts in Early Apocalyptic Literature

This section focuses on understanding what feelings the emergence of beasts induce in the dreamers and pays particular attention to the literary context in which the dreams are presented in the narratives. The apocalyptic literature in this section will

13) Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World*, 112.

14) Frances Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests: Jewish Dreams in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 55.

be presented in chronological order of composition; Daniel, 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and the Shepherd of Hermas.¹⁵⁾

3.1. The Book of Daniel and the Four Monstrous Beasts

The Book of Daniel, in particular chapters 7 and 8 presents remarkable visionary images of beasts. In chapter 7, Daniel experiences a dream-vision of four beasts symbolizing the four kingdoms. In the dream-vision, Daniel reports the emergence of the four beasts;

In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in bed. Then he wrote down the dream: I, Daniel, saw in my vision by night the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea, and four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. ... I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ... To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed (Dan 7: 1-14).

In the passage, Daniel saw the vision of the four kingdoms as four beasts; a lion with an eagle's wings (Dan 7:4), a bear

15) This paper assumes that the book of Daniel was finally redacted around roughly 164 B.C.E, and that 1 Enoch as a compilation of five books was dated from the third century B.C.E to the first century C.E. See, Collins, John J. and Daniel Harlow, eds. *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2010), 514, 585.

raised up on one side with three tusks in its mouth (Dan 7:5), a leopard with four heads and four wings (Dan 7:6), and the monstrous beast with iron teeth and ten horns (Dan 7:7-8). All of the beast possess multiple animal traits and show one character of brutality, such as the 'three tusks' (Dan 7:5), 'devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet' (Dan 7:7).

The theme of the emerging four kingdoms in the passage has thematic precedents like the metals that symbolize kingdoms in Zoroastrian myths. Moreover, the reference to the monsters from the sea echoes God's primordial creation of the sea monsters (Gen 1:21).¹⁶⁾ The sea monsters in the Hebrew Bible serve as a precedent to these beasts¹⁷⁾ and they often are described as being defeated and slaughtered by God in the context of a mythical battle.

By his power he stilled the Sea; by his understanding he struck down Rahab. By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent (Job 26:12-13).

16) It is debated whether Daniel was influenced from outside sources or whether the narrative is based on independent ideas. The theme of the four kingdoms is discussed in Collins, *Daniel*, 280-294; In this section, my attention lies on the description of the monsters in the literary structure, not on the analysis of the historical connection and background of the four kingdoms. John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 282; The beasts from the sea in Daniel are understood in light of the biblical tradition referring to the sea monster (kh/toj) in Gen 1:21 and dragons or monsters in Isa 27:1; 51:9-11. Concerning the analysis of the primordial beasts, see K. William Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts: Leviathan and Behemoth in Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Mary K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); 김대웅. "다니엘의 묵시적 이상과 에스겔의 소명 기사: 다니엘 7장의 에스겔 1장 인유(Allusion) 해석," 「성경과 신학」 80(2016), 37-72.

17) Collins, *Daniel*, 294-295.

You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm (Psalm 89:9-10).

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD! Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over? (Isaiah 51:9-10)¹⁸⁾

All these citations refer to the sea as the place in which the monsters dwell. Just as God is depicted as a warrior defeating the monsters in the above passages, God in the book of Daniel also slaughters the most powerful beast and revokes the authority and dominion of the rest (Dan 7:11-12). Given the mythological background that all beasts come from the sea, reflecting the primordial monsters of the sea in Gen 1:21 (“God created the great sea monsters”), the dreamer feels dread when he looks at the turbulent sea.

The beasts are listed in the order of lion, leopard, bear, and the monstrous beast. Even though Hosea 13:7-8 demonstrates a similar order of three beasts (Hosea 13:7-8),¹⁹⁾ this does not influence the order of the four beasts in Daniel;²⁰⁾ The description in Hosea is different from that in Daniel because while the beasts in Hosea imply the magnificence of God, those in Daniel have negative connotations of destruction. Daniel uti-

18) Emphases are added.

19) “So I will become like **a lion** to them, like **a leopard** I will lurk beside the way. I will fall upon them like **a bear** robbed of her cubs, and will tear open the covering of their heart; there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild animal would mangle them...” Emphasis added.

20) John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Montana: Scholar Press, 1977), 104-105.

lizes contemporary notions of ferocious animals to describe the beasts' brutality.²¹⁾ In spite of the different appearance of each beast, every beast is described as brutally carnivorous. In the case of the bear, which in reality is omnivorous, Daniel emphasizes the creature's "three tusks in its mouth among its teeth" (Dan 7: 5) and clarifies that the bear is carnivorous.

According to the biblical tradition, the sea itself as well as the monsters symbolizes the enemies of the Israelites (Isaiah 57:19, "the wicked are like the tossing sea"). The power of each successive beast increases and reaches a peak upon the emergence of the fourth beast (Dan 7: 7, "terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong").

Daniel's emotional response to these visionary experiences is one of fear and anxiety;

Dan 7:2, "the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea"

Dan 7:7a, "a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong"

Dan 7:7b, "It had great iron teeth and was devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet"

Dan 7:15, "the visions of my head terrified me."²²⁾

Daniel interprets 'the great sea' as overwhelming in size and chaos and describes it in destructive terms. Daniel is aware of the pervasive chaos of the world through the emergence of the four beasts. Daniel emphasizes the mysterious appearances of the beasts, visualizes the brutality and weirdness of the evil dominion,²³⁾ and interprets the pervasive chaos of the world through the emergence and the bestial character of the four

21) Collins, *Daniel*, 295.

22) Emphases added.

23) Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, 114.

beasts (Dan 7:23, “it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces”). It is horrifying to see terrestrial animals coming from the sea, demonstrating the distortion of the order of creation.

After Daniel asked for and received an interpretation of the vision from an angelic figure described as “one of the attendants” beside the divine throne (Dan 7:17-27), Daniel is filled with fear and anxiety (Dan 7:28, “my thoughts greatly terrified me, and my face turned pale”).

Daniel’s vision does not simply describe that there will be four kingdoms, but provides a vivid picture of chaos and fear. In Daniel’s eyes, the four beasts are not only the allegorical symbol of God, but also constitute a real power endangering the order of creation. Moreover, the brutality of the monstrous beasts and Daniel’s abhorrence towards them presents the beasts as an enemy and conceptualizes the real-life enemies that Daniel will encounter.²⁴⁾

3.2. Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch chapters 83-90) and the Beasts

1 Enoch is an expanded biblical narrative of Enoch in Gen 5:21-24. The Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch (hereafter *An. Apoc.*)²⁵⁾ consists of Enoch’s narration to his son, Methuselah, of two dream visions he saw before he was married (1 Enoch 83:1). The narratives of the dream-visions in *An. Apoc.* are presented as allegorical narratives symbolizing human history. The first

24) Lorenzo DiTommaso, ‘Apocalyptic others’ in *The “Other” in Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Daniel C. Harlow et al. (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 230-235.

25) For the translation of 1 Enoch, George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001); 박정수, “헬레니즘 시대 유대 묵시문학의 시,공간적인 세계관-에녹1서를 중심으로,” 「신약논단」 3 (2011), 967-996.

dream occurred when Enoch was young and concerned the destruction of the world by the flood (1 Enoch chapters 83-84). The second dream occurred before he took his wife (1 Enoch 85:1) and followed an allegorical form presenting human history from Adam (1 Enoch 85:3) to the Judgment (1 Enoch 90:20, “I saw until a throne was constructed in the pleasant land and the Lord of the sheep sat upon it, and he took all the sealed books and opened those books before the Lord of the sheep”). In the dream, human beings are described as animals, the fallen angels as fallen stars (1 Enoch 86:1), and the seven archangels as human figures (1 Enoch 90:22).

The narrative begins with the description of Enoch’s dream, “And again I saw with my eyes as I was sleeping” (1 Enoch 86:1). In his dream-vision, the beasts appear as children of three bulls after the flood (1 Enoch 89:10). 1 Enoch 89:9-11 presents a list of wild beasts symbolizing the Gentile nations;²⁶⁾

That white bull who had become a man came out of that vessel, and the three bulls with him. And one of those three bulls was white like that bull, and one of them was red like blood, and one of them was black. And that white bull departed from them. And they began to beget wild beasts and birds, so that there arose from them every kind of species: lions, leopards, wolves, dogs, hyenas, wild boars, foxes, conies, pigs, falcons, vultures, kites, eagles, and ravens. ... And I saw the sheep groaning and crying and petitioning their Lord with all their might...(1 Enoch 89:9-16).

While echoing the description of the destructive beasts in Ezekiel 34:5 and 8, the An. Apoc. describes how the wild beasts are unnaturally born from different species and demonstrates anomalies in the order of creation. Most of the beasts in 1 Enoch 89:9-16 are predators of sheep; even though the pig is

26) Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 377-378.

not a carnivore it is considered impure (Lev 11:7, “The pig ... is unclean for you”). The negative connotation of unnaturally born beasts is verified by the fact that the cows, camels and asses in 1 Enoch 86:4 were born unnaturally and eventually are punished by the flood (1 Enoch 89:6, “all the bulls and elephants and camels and asses sank to the bottom together with every animals so that I could not see them”). The random listing of the beasts emphasizes chaos and the dreamer’s perplexity. It is dreadful for the dreamer to see the unnatural birth of the beasts and is even abhorrent to look at them because some beasts such as eagles and vultures that are considered impure in Leviticus chapter 11 are born in the vision from bulls, which are considered pure for sacrifice (Lev 4:3).

In Enoch’s vision, the carnivorous animals are described as predators to the sheep. Enoch witnesses the Lord of the sheep giving the sheep into the hands of predators like lions, tigers, wolves, hyenas, and foxes.²⁷⁾ The wild animals tear the sheep into pieces (1 Enoch 89:51-57);

And again I saw that those sheep strayed and went off in many paths and abandoned that house of theirs. ... After that I saw when they abandoned the house of the Lord and his tower, they went astray in everything, and their eyes were blinded. ... And I began to cry out with all my might and to call to the Lord of the sheep and to show him concerning the sheep, because they were devoured by all the wild beasts. And he was silent, though he saw (it), and he rejoiced because they were devoured and swallowed up and carried off, and he abandoned them into the hands of all the beasts as fodder

27) Concerning the historical identifications of the beasts see, Patrick A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1993), 32-36. For an analysis of the translations of the animals see, Daniel C. Olson, *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch All Nations Shall be Blessed* (Leiden : Brill, 2013), 122-129.

(1 Enoch 89:51-58).

This passage in Enoch's continuous dream-vision about human history allegorically introduces Israel's sin and God's wrath against Israel (1 Enoch 89:54). As a result of God's punishment, the sheep are described as 'abandoned' by the Lord (1 Enoch 89: 55, 56, and 58). The owner does not only abandon the sheep, but also abandons the house and the tower which thematically reflects 2 Kings 23:27 (The LORD said, "I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel; and I will reject this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.").²⁸⁾ While the tower and house in Enoch's description of the vision was expressed as "the house of the Lord and his tower" (1 Enoch 89:54) before the beast came in, they are described as 'their house and their tower' when they are given to the beasts (1 Enoch 89:56). The change of the personal pronoun indicates the change of the owner and refers to the fissure between God and Israel. The place that the beasts tear down does not belong to God but rather to the Israelites because the house and the tower are not under God's protection in Enoch's vision.

The destructive activities of the beasts induce the dreamer's misery. The beasts' devouring and swallowing up the sheep after "tearing them in pieces" (1 Enoch 89: 55, 56) results in Enoch's petition on behalf of the sheep (1 Enoch 89: 57).²⁹⁾

Enoch's petition stands in contrast with the abandonment of God and in the scene of his petition Enoch is looking at himself making a petition for Israel.³⁰⁾ His intercessory action is understood as a response to the disastrous situation before

28) Emphasis added.

29) "And I began to cry out with all my might and to call to the Lord of the sheep and to show him concerning the sheep..." Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 385.

30) Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch*, 323.

him. In 1 Enoch 89: 57, Enoch makes another petition for the sake of the sheep attacked by the beasts. However, neither of his petitions are accepted by the Lord of the sheep. In the first petition, Enoch sees that the Lord of the sheep is silent and simply looks on at their tribulations. In the second petition, instead of describing the response of the Lord, Enoch finds himself looking at the sheep as they are attacked (1 Enoch 90:4, “I saw until those sheep were devoured by the dogs and by the eagles and by the kites”). While Enoch called and cried out to the Lord as an expression of active intercession in the first petition, he only cried and lamented for the sheep in the second petition and does not even ask for help. The more he sees the sheep, the more desperately he is aware of the Lord’s abandonment of the sheep “until the Lord of sheep” will bring “a new house, larger and higher than that first one” (1 Enoch 90:29).

3.2.1. Ezra and the Beasts

In 4 Ezra, which was composed around late first century C. E., Ezra seeks the answer to why God’s chosen must suffer disasters like the destruction of Jerusalem and persecution at the hands of Gentile nations and how these disasters fit into God’s plan for his people.³¹⁾ In 4 Ezra the monsters appear twice; the Primordial monsters in the creation (4 Ezra 6:47-52) and the eagle of the fifth vision of Ezra (4 Ezra chapters 11-12).

31) Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 520; For the historical approach of 4 Ezra, see Kenneth R. Jones, *Jewish Reaction to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2011.), 39-77. Concerning the theme of the restoration in 4 Ezra see, Jonathan Moo, *Creation, Nature, and Hope in 4 Ezra* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 104-159, in particular 148-152.

While the former appears in Ezra's retelling of the creation story, Ezra witnesses the latter in the visionary experience describing eschatological contexts. This section focuses on the monstrous beast of the fifth vision in chapter 11-12:3.

In his fifth vision, Ezra dreams of an eagle combined with a deformed body and a lion with human traits (4 Ezra chapters 11).

On the second night I had a dream: I saw rising from the sea an eagle that had twelve feathered wings and three heads. I saw it spread its wings over the whole earth, and all the winds of heaven blew upon it, and the clouds were gathered around it. I saw that out of its wings there grew opposing wings; but they became little, puny wings. But its heads were at rest; the middle head was larger than the other heads, but it too was at rest with them. Then I saw that the eagle flew with its wings, and it reigned over the earth and over those who inhabit it. ... Then I woke up in great perplexity of mind and great fear (4 Ezra 11:1-12:3).

In this vision, the eagle comes from the sea, spreads his wings, and flies over the earth, striking terror into all that see it.³²⁾ The wings are described as a kind of tool by which the eagle performs its will (4 Ezra 11:7-10). When the middle head disappears and the right head eats the left, the lion appears and addresses the eagle as a whole, not the remaining head (4 Ezra 11:37). After the lion foretells the disappearance of the eagle's body parts (wings, winglets, head, talons and all) a short and tumultuous period under the authority of the remaining winglets occurs (4 Ezra 12:2) and the whole body of the eagle bursts into flames and is consumed (4 Ezra 12:3).

In Ezra's vision, Uriel the angel refers to the vision of Daniel (4 Ezra 12:11, "The eagle that you saw coming up from the

32) See, Michael Edward Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 366.

sea is the fourth kingdom that appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel”). In this respect, the basic structure of the vision of the eagle parallels Dan 7:1-11 and the eagle is associated with Rome.³³⁾ In terms of the thematic connections between 4 Ezra and Daniel, the eagle in 4 Ezra and the fourth beast in Daniel both come from the sea, possess authority, and then are both judged and burned. That said, there are also differences; Ezra describes an eagle (4 Ezra 11:1, “I saw rising from the sea an eagle”), while Daniel calls it a beast (Dan 7:7, “I saw in the visions by night a fourth beast”). And, even though both monstrous beasts rise from the sea (4 Ezra 11:1 and Dan 7:2) the sea is not the same place for 4 Ezra as Dan 7. The sea in 4 Ezra does not have the mythic resonance as it does in Daniel. 4 Ezra regards the sea as a symbol of mystery surrounding the beast and its coming. In 4 Ezra 11:1-2, the author describes the eagle surrounded with “the winds of heaven” and “clouds” lacking the animate, mythical significance of the description in Dan 7.³⁴⁾ In Dan 7 “the four winds of heaven” stir the sea before the emergence of the beasts (Dan 7:2) and the cloud comes with the appearance of the “one like a human being” (Dan 7:13).³⁵⁾ The image of the heads devouring each other in 4 Ezra 11:35 reflects the image of the beast devouring bodies in Dan 7:5-7, though it is even more dreadful to see a monster devouring its own appendages (4 Ezra 11:35) than the beast which devours “much flesh” of other creatures (Dan 7:5).

4 Ezra demonstrates the chaotic and anomalous character of the scene through depicting the eagle rising from the sea

33) Jones, *Jewish Reaction to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70*, 38-77. Jones reads the vision of the eagle and the lion as a postponement of the divine judgment against Rome and as opposing the notion that Roman prosperity is not divinely granted.

34) Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 348.

35) Collins, Daniel, 280-94.

and flying into the air. The physical appearance of the eagle as a hybrid between different animals and the lion as a combination between human and animal figures are grotesque enough to evoke the horrible emotions of the dreamer. The gigantic size of the monstrous beasts as well as their deformation demonstrates clear malevolence (4 Ezra 11:2). Moreover, the hybrid oddity of the beasts remains a critical element in any analysis as representing chaos and the destruction of the order of creation.

The vision of the two unearthly beasts (a lion and an eagle) induces both horrible and perplexing emotions in the dreamer upon awaking (4 Ezra 12:3, “Then I woke up in great perplexity of mind and great fear”). This fearfulness in 4 Ezra does not only indicate the dreamer’s immediate emotion, but also evokes the fear of future events at the end of history (4 Ezra 6:15, 6:23, 6:24, 10:25, 12:3).³⁶⁾

The monsters are described as a source of horror and serve as a reference for the oppressing enemies at the end time. The images of the monstrous beasts represent the horror dreamers feel towards the catastrophic events they might encounter during their lifetime; that Ezra emphasizes continuous hope of God through dramatizing their images and fates at the end time (4 Ezra 12:46).³⁷⁾

3.4. The Shepherd of Hermas and the Beasts

The Shepherd of Hermas (hereafter Hermas), which was composed around late first century C. E., presents later Christian apocalyptic elements and contains narratives of visions.³⁸⁾ The

36) Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 352.

37) “...Take courage, O Israel; and do not be sorrowful, O house of Jacob; 47 for the Most High has you in remembrance, and the Mighty One has not forgotten you in your struggle...”

book, divided into two parts (chapters 1-24, chapters 25-114), thematically deals with the issues concerning penance, double-mindedness, necessity of repentance, and encouragement of endurance against the tribulation.³⁹⁾ In particular, Hermas 6:7, 7:4, 22:1, 23:4-5, and 24:6 focus on explaining “the great tribulation” (θλίψις) that is to come which is symbolized as the monster (Hermas 23:5, “this beast is a foreshadowing of the great tribulation that is coming”).⁴⁰⁾ Besides this clearly eschatological perspective about suffering, Hermas also describes community members who have suffered and endured all kinds of persecutions in the recent past. Consequently, these members are granted a privileged status in the community gatherings (Hermas 9:9, “The place on the right side is for others, who have already pleased God and have suffered for the sake of the Name”) and in the divine building (Hermas 13:2, “But who are the ones that are dragged from the deep and placed in the building? They are those who have suffered for the name of the Lord”). In the context of the prediction of the tribulation to come, the vision of the monster is introduced in chapter 22:

38) N. Brox. “Hermas (Shepherd of Hermas),” in *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, edited by Siegmund Dopf and Wilhelm Geerlings, trans. Matthew O’Connell (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 278.

39) For an introduction to the historical overview see, Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 1-38.

40) Hermas chapter 6:7, “Blessed are those if you who patiently endure **the coming great tribulation** and who will not deny their life.”

7:4, “Behold, **tribulation is coming.**”

22:1, “What I saw, brothers and sisters, twenty days after the previous vision occurred, was a foreshadowing of **the impending persecution.**”

23:5, “This beast is a foreshadowing of **the great tribulation that is coming.**”

24:6, “You have also the foreshadowing of **the great tribulation that is coming.**” Emphasis added. All these verses articulate the future aspect of the tribulation to prepare the elect for this eventuality.

What I saw, brothers and sisters, twenty days after the previous vision occurred, was a foreshadowing of the impending persecution. I was going into the country by the Campanian Way. The place is a little over a mile from the public road, and is easily reached. So, as I was walking by myself, I asked the Lord to complete the revelations and visions ... I took courage and faced the beast. And the beast was coming on with such a rush that it could destroy a city. I came near it, and huge though it was, the sea monster stretched itself out on the ground and merely thrust out its tongue, and did not even twitch until I had passed by it.” (Hermas 22:1-10).⁴¹⁾

His vision explicitly occurred in the dream (Hermas, 1:3, “I fell asleep as I walked. And a spirit took me and carried me away through a pathless region”). The vision of the beast in chapter 5 does not begin with the mention of the dreamer’s sleep as in chapter 1 (Hermas 1:3). The word, ‘ὄρασις’ at the beginning of the vision of the beast (Hermas 4:1) is a technical term from antiquity that indicates a description relating to a dream and refers to the revelatory experience as a meaningful vision of a dream.⁴²⁾

The beast in Hermas does not emerge at the beginning of the dream’s vision, and it comes after the scene to enlarge the cloud of dust (Hermas 22:6). The scene of the growing cloud serves to demonstrate that the monster originated from an extra-terrestrial realm. This wild beast (θηρίον) is described as something like a sea monster (κῆτος), which reflects the same entity as Rahab of Job26:12 (“By his power he stilled the Sea; by his understanding he struck down Rahab”) and the fish of Jonah 2:1 (“Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of

41) For translation, Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 495-497.

42) Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 133.

the fish”) in LXX.⁴³⁾ While the monster emerging from the cloud of dust demonstrates the status of chaos and identifies itself as a mystical creature, it also implies enormous size and movement through comparing it with the sea monster.⁴⁴⁾ The image of the locusts in Hermas 22:6 is thematically linked to the image of the locusts in Rev 9:2 (“Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions of the earth”), strengthening the dreadfulness of the visionary scene.⁴⁵⁾ The horrific scene of the monster emerging from a cloud of dust and pouring out flaming locusts from its mouth disturbs the dreamer’s emotions; “I began to cry and to beg the Lord to rescue me from it” (Hermas, 22:7).

It is interesting that unlike the descriptions of monsters in Daniel, 4 Ezra and An. Apoc., Hermas provides the specific measure of the monster (Hermas 22:4, “And the beast was about one hundred feet long, and it had a head like a ceramic jar”). Even though the measurement is based on the dreamer’s guess by sight, this specification enables the reader to visualize the creature as a real entity.

In sum, as enemies, the monsters represent an otherness that opposes the dreamers. The monsters appear at a time of afflictions and extreme anxiety and dramatize the anxiety and dreadfulness of the dreams.

4. The Roles of the Monstrous Beasts in Dream – Visions

While monstrous beasts are described as the symbol of evil

43) In LXX, Rahab in Job 26:12 and the fish in Jonah 2:1 both are rendered as ‘κῆτος’ just as the sea monster in Hermas 22:6.

44) Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 92.

45) The connotation of locust with disaster originates from the divine disaster against Egypt in Exodus 10:1-20.

and chaos, they all follow routine imagery; they have physically anomalous and grotesque bodies, are giant, and are sometimes awful half-human hybrids combining animal and human traits (Dan 7:4-8, 4 Ezra 11:7, Animal Apocalypse 89:51-54, Hermas 22:6). These anomalous traits induce extreme fear in the dreamer of each narrative.

When did the dreamers start to be horrified by the beasts? In terms of this liminal aspect, place and time need to be considered. Some visions are given at night (Dan 7:7, “I saw in the visions by night a fourth beast,” 4 Ezra 11:1, “On the second night I had a dream I saw rising from the sea an eagle”). The image of the dark night provides the setting for the dreamer’s horrible emotion, and even more so when the beasts emerge from the dark sea. These monstrous beasts remain distant from the civilization. They live in the dark and hidden place under the sea (Dan 7:3, 4 Ezra 11:1, Hermas 22:6) and they all show strong hostility against mankind and symbolize malice towards both man and God. The monsters are described as being antagonistic against God’s orders; some beasts are unnaturally born (Animal Apocalypse 89:9-16), others are hybrids of different species or speak human languages (Dan 7:4-8), and others are physically deformed (4 Ezra 11:22). Moreover, the monstrous beasts frighten dreamers because of their bestial acts like “devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet” (Dan 7:7), devouring each other (4 Ezra 11:31), “tearing those sheep in pieces” (1 Enoch 89:54), and destroying the city (Hermas 22:8). Consequently, the supernatural monsters seem to offend the dreamers’ natural sensibilities.

Even though the time and place of the monsters’ emergence can induce the dreamers’ horror, the most fear-inducing hybridization is the beasts’ enormous size (Dan 7:3, “four great beasts,” 4 Ezra 11:2, “I saw it spread its wings over the whole earth,” Hermas 22:6, “And the beast was about one hundred feet long”).

In most visions, the beasts do not have any name, and instead are referred to by their likeness to a lion, an eagle, a sea monster (Dan 7: 4-6, Hermas 22:6) and sometimes are even too indescribable to make a connotation at all (Dan 7:7). This quasi-classification of the beasts emphasizes the disordered status of their world. According to Gen 2:12, it was the role of man to give names to the creatures (“The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field”). The presence of the unidentifiable beasts, however, poses an uncontrollable situation beyond man’s capacity. In all the vision narratives above, human agency does not confront the monsters but simply looks on at the scenes passively on account of the dreamer’s hopelessness and perplexity. Only through divine aid may the dreamer influence the situation and explore the meaning of the uncertain realm (Dan 7:11, 4 Ezra 12:1, Hermas 22:8).

Just as the beasts follow descriptive patterns such as emergence, destructive activity, and disappearance, the dreams too have a consistent framework. In the dream, contrasting realities like frustration and hope, death and life, and triumph and defeat meet each other, qualifying and sometimes even inverting their places. Furthermore, the appearance of the beasts in the vision demonstrates the dreamer’s breakdown and fear and eventually makes the dreamer expect a hero to right the situation. The emergence of the monsters bring out the tension of the coming battle, implicitly and explicitly showing the common pattern of the appearance—activity—slaughter by the deity warrior of the monsters which is embedded in ancient combat myths. In Daniel chapter 7, God appeared as a warrior to defeat the beasts (Dan 7:11). The monsters and the warrior constitute a pair of inseparable polarities that unify a system of ideas underlying order itself.⁴⁶⁾ In the visions, God is described as the warrior

46) David Gilmore, *Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary*

who sustains the order and harmony of the world, while the monsters are described as those that threaten the order and evoke chaos.⁴⁷⁾ The slaughter of the monsters shows who has power to rule over the world, justifying the natural order from before the monster's appearance.

5. Conclusion

The history of monsters is as old as that of humanity. The appearance of the monstrous beasts discussed in this paper project unavoidable fear, reflect otherness, fantasize the process of transgression, and connote deliberate behaviors of cruelty and atrocity.⁴⁸⁾ In the visions, the monsters symbolize rising enemies, the dreamer's anxiety.

Finally, the monsters maximize the dreadfulness and the mystical aspect of the divine message in each vision. The monsters do not simply constitute what the dreamers would like to avoid, for the dream-vision and its contents are granted to reveal divine messages. Each dream is characterized by God's overwhelming agency compared to man's passivity. It is God who provides the meaning of these dreams by sending a message of mysterious figures and scenes (Dan 7:16, 4 Ezra 12:10, Hermas 23:4). In the vision, the presence of monsters is not fictional imagination, but actual reality in the world.⁴⁹⁾ By meticulously describing

Terrors (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 27.

47) Rebecca Raphael, "Monsters and the Crippled Cosmos: Construction of the Other in *Fourth Ezra*" in *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in honor of John J. Collins*, eds. Daniel Harlow etc. (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 288.

48) David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 158-160.

49) Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 4-6.

the monsters in the visions and borrowing images of primordial monsters from the time of creation, the dreamers communicate with God and their reports encourage the readers to be aware of the mysterious message from God and to warn the reader about what the monsters will bring out in the world (4 Ezra 16: 35-37, “Listen now to these things, and understand them, ... The calamities draw near, and are not delayed,” Hermas 23:5, “Go, therefore, and declare to the Lord’s elect his mighty works, and tell them that this beast is a foreshadowing of the great tribulation that is coming”).

<주요어>

짐승, 비전, 환상, 꿈, 초기 유대 묵시문학, 초대교회 묵시문학

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<Abstract>

**The Function of Monstrous Beasts
in Visionary Experiences:**

Understanding Beasts in Early Jewish and
Christian Apocalyptic Literature

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In the early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple Period, monstrous beasts appear in various types of visionary experiences. Some beasts are imaginary and possess unknown forms, and others are uncanny beasts with specified combinations of bestial figures and human traits. This paper aims to uncover the contribution of the dream-vision narratives of beasts to early apocalyptic literature, namely in Daniel, the Animal Apocalypse, 4 Ezra, and the Shepherd of Hermas.

In the first section, I present a theoretical overview of the ancient attitude towards dreams in the Hebrew Bible as describing the thematic backdrop of early apocalyptic literature. This provides a fundamental understanding of the bestial images in the dream-vision and demonstrate that their occurrence in the early Jewish and Christian literature is a divine and revelatory message granted only to the elect and wise. I will argue that the selected apocalyptic literature do not simply provide access to the individual's report about the visionary experiences, but also reveal the time, emotion, and place in which the authors wrote these narratives.

The paper synthesizes the investigations of the monsters in the previous sections in terms of the commonality and partic-

ularity embedded in the literary functions and characters. I argue that the images of the monstrous beasts express the dreamer's personal crisis, depression, anxieties, perplexity and fear. Furthermore, I present that they represent the other, conceptualizing the dreamer's enemies as well as distort the order of creation.

<초록>

환상에 나타난 괴물 같은 짐승의 역할

- 초기 유대교 그리고 기독교의 묵시 문헌에 나타난 짐승들 이해하기 -

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유대, 그리고 초대 교회의 묵시 문헌들은 다양한 환상의 경험을 통해 본 괴물 모양의 짐승들을 독자들에게 소개한다. 그 괴물들 중 일부는 어디에서도 보지 못한 상상의 모습이기도 하고, 또 다른 경우에는 맹수와 사람의 특성을 가지기도 한다. 이러한 특이한 모습의 짐승들이 등장하는 장면은 우리로 하여금 다음의 질문을 던지게 한다; 이 짐승들은 어디에서 오며, 묵시록의 저자 또는 화자의 환상에서 어떤 역할을 담당하는가? 그리고 묵시록의 짐승들에게 공통점이 있다면, 그것은 무엇일까?

본 연구는 이 성전 시기의 유대와 초기 기독교 묵시 문헌 중 다니엘, 동물 묵시록, 제 4에스라서, 그리고 헤르마스의 묵자의 환상 또는 묵시 가운데 등장하는 짐승들의 기능에 관해 탐구한다. 또한 묵시 문헌들과 환상을 경험한 사람들이 이런 짐승들을 등장시킴으로써 환상의 경험(시간, 장소, 내용 등)에 관한 것뿐만 아니라, 환상을 경험하는 순간과 그 이후의 감정들도 드러내고 있음을 살펴본다.

이를 위해 본 연구는 먼저 구약성경에서 하나님의 뜻을 드러내는 계시의 도구로서 꿈에 관해 어떤 견해를 가지고 있는지를 살펴 묵시문헌의 문화적인 배경을 탐구할 것이다. 이어서 꿈과 환상을 통해 본 괴물의 형상을 한 짐승들을 언급하고 있는 일부 묵시문헌들을 문학적 · 수사적으로 분석하여, 이 짐승들의 등장과 활동에 관한 내용을 살피고, 이와 함께 저자 또는 화자의

감정이 표현되고 있는지, 있다면 어떤 형태로 드러나고 있는지를 분석할 것이다. 끝으로 묵시 문헌들에 등장하는 짐승들의 공통점과 개별성을 살펴볼 것이다.

이를 통해 본 연구는 첫째, 환상과 꿈은 하나님의 계시를 전달하는 매개체 또는 수단으로서 하나님께서 택한 일부의 사람에게만 허용되는 제한적 방법 이고, 둘째, 묵시 문헌들에 나타나는 짐승들은 흉측하고 공포스러운 외양을 갖고 있다는 유사성과 각기 다른 방식의 파괴적인 행동을 하는 차별적 모습을 가지고 있으며, 셋째, 이 짐승들은 그것들을 경험하고 있는 사람들이 처해있는 상황에 대한 그 개인의 위기감과 함께 그로 인한 감정적 좌절, 불안, 당혹감, 그리고 공포를 표현하고 있고, 마지막으로 이 공포스러운 상상의 생명체들은 하나님께서 만들어 놓으신 창조의 질서를 왜곡하는 것으로, 앞으로 환상과 계시 가운데 있는 화자 혹은 그의 계시를 듣는 사람들이 현재 이미 대면하고 있거나 앞으로 하게 될 적이나 타자(otherness)를 대면하고 있음을 논증한다.