them to one degree or another.[16] The mediation of divine messengers would provide an attractive alternative to the sanctioned cult for privately accessing divine presence and favor, particularly for the growing diaspora communities and those increasingly finding themselves outside the shrinking boundaries of "orthodoxy."

Internal prohibitions are particularly concentrated in rabbinic literature, such as *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*'s commentary on Exod 20:20, which interprets the prohibition of fashioning images to include "the likeness of my servants who serve before me on high: not a likeness of messengers, not a likeness of ophanim, and not a likeness of cherubim" (Lauterbach 2004, 2.344; cf. Stuckenbruck 1995, 57–59). Most of the accusations about worship came from other groups, such as Clement of Alexandria's accusation in *Stromata* 6.5.41 that Jewish people were worshipping (*latreuō*) messengers. Origen of Alexandria reported in the third century CE that a Greek philosopher named Celsus accused Jewish people of worshipping messengers (Origen, *Cels*. 1.26). Already in the Christian Epistle to the Colossians (late first century CE), the author refers to "worship of messengers" (*thrēskeia tōn angelōn*; Col 2:18).[17] Beginning in the fifth century CE, petitions and incantations addressed to divine messengers appear on bowls and amulets. These practices drew from existing conventions directed at high deities, but it is not clear how early they began to be aimed at divine messengers.[18] What *is* clear is that the intuitive compulsion to access divine agency could not be entirely quashed by the machinations of authority. More effective was to redirect the impulse to an agent more directly under the control of cultic authority, which brings us back to the *šēm*.

ŠEM

While the narratives that involve the messenger of YHWH make the most thorough and explicit use of the *šēm* as a vehicle for divine identity and presence, its use as a sort of proxy for the deity is known from several passages in the Hebrew Bible (Lewis 2020, 279–92). One example is Ps 76:2–3:[19] "God is known in

[16] See, for instance, Ehrman 2014, 55: "Ancient authors insisted that angels not be worshiped precisely because angels were being worshiped." For broader discussions, see Stuckenbruck 1995; Gieschen 1998, 124; Olyan 1993; Tuschling 2007.

[17] On the influence of this passage on later Christian engagement with the veneration of divine messengers, see Cline 2011, 137–46.

[18] See Shaked, Ford, and Bhayro 2013. There is also discussion in Cline 2011, 137–65 and throughout de Bruyn 2017. For the reconstruction of an invocation of mediatory divine figures at Qumran, see Penney and Wise 1994.

[19] S. Dean McBride (1969, 67) employs the concept of "nominal realism," which he describes as a belief in "a concrete, ontological relationship … between words and the