JOHN J. COLLINS

Scriptures and Sectarianism

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
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Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

The essays in this volume were written over a decade, roughly 2003 to 2013. The introductory essay, "What have we learned from the Dead Sea Scrolls?" has not been published in this form before. The essays are grouped in three clusters. The first deals with the authority of Scripture and the various ways in which it is interpreted. The second deals with historiography, the emergence of the sect and its relation to the Enochic writings and *4QInstruction*. The third cluster deals with aspects of the sectarian worldview: covenant and dualism, the angelic world, the afterlife, prayer and ritual, and wisdom. Finally, an epilogue consisting of one essay illustrates the relevance of the Scrolls for early Christianity by discussing the case of the Suffering Servant.

These essays are intended to complement my other writings on the Dead Sea Scrolls: *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997); *The Scepter and the Star. Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); *Beyond the Qumran Community. The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); and *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). I have not included in this collection essays that are reworked in one or other of those books, but some occasional overlap is inevitable.

I would like to thank Jörg Frey, with whom I have co-chaired a seminar at SNTS on the Scrolls and the New Testament for five years, for accepting the volume for publication in WUNT, Mark Lester for preparing the Bibliography and James Nati for compiling the indices.

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The essay "Covenant and Dualism in the Dead Sea Scrolls" was presented at an Orion Seminar at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in May, 2013.

Chapter One

Introduction. What Have We Learned from the Dead Sea Scrolls?

It is probably fair to say that the Dead Sea Scrolls have commanded more attention in the last sixty years or so than any other body of literature related to the Bible. Not all of that attention has been salutary. The Scrolls have been sensationalized and misrepresented; Vatican plots have been alleged; they have been the occasion of bitter controversy over the rights of editors and the obligation to publish primary sources, and they have given rise to at least two lawsuits. Exhibitions of the Scrolls continue reliably to draw thousands of visitors (and letters of complaint from the dissident scholar Norman Golb).[1] It is not unreasonable to ask whether all the fuss is justified, and whether the Scrolls have had an impact on our knowledge of the Bible and its *Umwelt* that is commensurate with the controversies they have generated. Now that the entire corpus is finally in the public domain, the time seems ripe to take stock and assess the significance of what has been called the greatest archeological discovery of the twentieth century.

The origin of the collection

At the outset, it may be well to recall some basic facts about the corpus. Fragments of approximately 930 manuscripts were recovered from the caves around Qumran. 750 of these are in Hebrew, 150 in Aramaic and 27 in Greek.[2] Their dates have been estimated, on the basis of paleography, to range from the third century BCE to the first century CE. They include all the books we know from the Hebrew Bible with the exception of Esther, but a huge range of literature besides. Nearly all the texts recovered from the caves are literary, as opposed to documentary, texts. Before the discovery of the Scrolls we had no surviving literature in Hebrew or Aramaic from the land of Israel between the mid-second century BCE and the mid-second century CE. The Scrolls, then, have the potential to shed unprecedented light on Judaism around the turn of the era.

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[1] On the reception of the Scrolls and the controversies they have engendered see my book *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) especially 213–42.

[2] For a comprehensive inventory see Emanuel Tov et al., *The Texts from the Judaean Desert. Indices and An Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series* (DJD 39; Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

But how far are these Scrolls representative of the Judaism of their time? Since the initial batch of scrolls included a rule for a sectarian religious community, the immediate assumption was that the scrolls had been the property of that community, and were hidden for safekeeping in time of upheaval. This assumption appeared to be confirmed by the excavation at Qumran and the discovery of Cave 4, a mere stone's throw from the site. While no manuscripts were actually found in the ruins, the archeologists found pottery identical to the "scroll-jars" that had been found in Cave 1. Consequently, the corpus of texts recovered from the caves became known as "the library of Qumran," a designation popularized by Frank Moore Cross in his classic account of the scrolls in 1958.[3]

But the idea of a library of this size by the shores of the Dead Sea is anomalous. Libraries were rare in antiquity, although they became somewhat more common in the Hellenistic period. The great palace library of the Assyrian king Asshurbanipal and the famous library of Alexandria were exceptional, and Qumran was a far cry from Alexandria. Libraries were often associated with temples, but these were usually of modest size. The largest known Mesopotamian temple library had about 800 tablets. At the other end of the spectrum, a temple at Edfu in Hellenistic Egypt had a catalogue with merely 35 titles. If indeed the site of Qumran housed a community such as the one described in the "*Manual of Discipline*" or *Community Rule* (1QS), then we should expect that there was some library at the site, since the members were supposed to devote a part of their nights to study (1QS 6:6–7). But it is difficult to believe that a community at this remote location had a library equal to that of the largest Mesopotamian temples.

In the early 1960's, a German scholar, Karl-Heinrich Rengstorff, suggested that the scrolls were the library of the Jerusalem temple.[4] He supposed that the library had been taken out of Jerusalem and hidden in the wilderness in 68 CE, when the priests realized that Jerusalem was doomed. This idea has been defended energetically by Norman Golb.[5] But many of the scrolls are clearly sectarian in character, and are highly critical of the Jerusalem temple and the High Priesthood. There are eleven copies of the sectarian *Community Rule*, seven copies of the Damascus Rule, and six copies of an avowedly separatist *halakhic* document known as 4QMMT, "Some of the Works of the Torah" which sets out the issues on which this sect disagreed with other Jews. The archenemy of the Teacher in the *Pesharim*, or biblical commentaries, is the Wicked Priest, who is universally understood to have been a High Priest. In contrast, only one text, 4Q448, which has been interpreted as a prayer for "Jonathan the King" (probably the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannae-

[3] Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958; 3rd ed.: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

[4] K. H. Rengstorff, *Ḥirbet Qumran and the Problem of the Dead Sea Cave Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1963).

[5] Norman Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Scrolls? The Search for the Secret of Qumran* (New York: Scribner, 1995).

us), can be construed as positive to the Hasmonean priest-kings, and even that is disputed. It is incomprehensible that the Jerusalem temple would have contained such an archive of sectarian writings, critical of the temple. This problem is not relieved by supposing that the manuscripts came from various libraries in Jerusalem.

My own suggestion on the provenance of the scrolls is bound up with my understanding of the sectarian movement attested in the rule books.[6] Too often, "the Qumran Community" has been regarded by scholars as an isolated, self-sufficient community, cut off from the outside world. But both the *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document* envision multiple settlements within the same broad movement. The *Community Rule* speaks of a quorum of ten members for an assembly (1QS 6:3,6). The *Damascus Document* speaks of people who live in "camps" according to the order of the land (CD 7:6). The movement is commonly identified with the Essenes, and these too are said to have been spread throughout the land.[7]

The corpus of scrolls found near Qumran has a sectarian character, but is too large and diverse to have been the library of a single settlement. I suggest that these scrolls represent many libraries, but sectarian libraries; the libraries of many settlements of the sect or movement. At the time of the war against Rome, members of the sect from various communities fled to the wilderness, and sought refuge with their brethren, either because of the remoteness of the area or because Qumran was a "motherhouse" as some have proposed.[8] They would have brought their scrolls with them. Hence the multiplicity of rules with minor variations, and the great variety of scribes attested by the handwriting. On this scenario, the scrolls would include the library of the people who lived at Qumran, but also the libraries of many *sectarian* communities that lived elsewhere. Both the sectarian character of the corpus and its internal variety can thus be acknowledged.

To say that the collection has a sectarian character is not to say that all these texts were composed at Qumran. Many of them were copied before the site of Qumran was settled at all. It is not even to say that all of them were composed by members of the sectarian movement, which is still most plausibly identified as the Essenes. As Carol Newsom pointed out twenty years ago, many of the scrolls lack "sectually explicit language" and were shared with other Judeans who were not members of this movement.[9] The Book of Tobit is a case in point. We must reckon then with the

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[6] John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community. The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); "Beyond the Qumran Community: Social Organization in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 16 (2009) 351–69.

[7] Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 75–6; *Apologia pro Iudaeis* (= *Hypothetica*) 1–2 (in Eusebius *PE* 8.6–7); Josephus, *JW* 2.124.

[8] It is also possible that some of the scrolls had been brought to Qumran earlier, at the time of the disturbances after the death of Herod. See Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, "Old Caves and Young Caves: A Statistical Reevaluation of a Qumran Consensus," *DSD* 14(2007) 313–33.

[9] Carol A. Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit' Literature from Qumran," in W. H. Propp, B. Halpern and D. N. Freedman, ed., *The Hebrew Bible and its Interpreters* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 167–87.

fact that some of this literature is peculiar to a sect, but also that much of it is not peculiarly sectarian, but part of the literary heritage of Judaism at large.

The Scrolls and the Bible

Perhaps the most obvious area where the Scrolls shed light on Judaism at large concerns the development of the Hebrew Bible.[10] Already in the 1950's William F. Albright and Frank Moore Cross pointed out the existence of different textual traditions.[11] A manuscript of Exodus (4QpaleoExod^{m}) dated to the middle of the first century BCE (on the basis of paleography) consistently preserves the expansions beyond the Masoretic Text that are known from the Samaritan Pentateuch. It does not, however, appear to have the specifically Samaritan commandment, to build an altar at Mt. Gerizim. A manuscript of the book of Numbers, 4QNum^{b}, is similar. It also included expansions found in the SP but not in the MT, but it does not contain specifically Samaritan readings. Again, a form of the text that was essentially the same as the Samaritan, but without the special references to Mt. Gerizim, seems to have been circulating in Judea in the first century BCE.

The Scrolls also yielded Hebrew texts of some books that correspond to the Septuagint rather than to the MT, and so might be labeled "proto-LXX." The text of Samuel found in three scrolls from Cave 4 consistently agrees with the Greek where the latter disagrees with the MT. One manuscript (4QSam^{a}) contains a paragraph that is not found in either the MT or the LXX, but is reflected in the paraphrase of the biblical account by the historian Josephus (*Ant* 6.68–9). An interesting case is provided by the Book of Jeremiah. The Greek text is shorter than the MT by about one eighth. Before the discovery of the Scrolls, it was often thought that the translators had simply abbreviated the book. Two small fragmentary manuscripts, however, attest to a Hebrew form of the "short" text underlying the Greek. Both of these manuscripts (4QJer^{b} and 4QJer^{d}) are relatively early, dating from the second century BCE. Two other manuscripts of Jeremiah, however, including one early one (4QJer^{a}, from the early second century BCE), have the long form of the text known from the MT.

The Scrolls have provided plenty of evidence that the traditional text of the Hebrew Bible, the MT, or rather the proto-MT, was well known already in the last centuries BCE. But it was not the only form of the text. Different editions circulated side by side, much as different English translations of the Bible circulate in the modern world.[12] (The textual differences in the Scrolls, however, are considerably more

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[10] See especially James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

[11] Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (3rd ed.), 121–42.

[12] The existence of variant editions is emphasized especially by Eugene C. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origin of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

substantial than the differences between modern translations, at least in some cases). The Book of Exodus was part of the Torah of Moses, and was certainly regarded as authoritative. But it was the book that was authoritative, rather than a particular form of the text, just as in a modern context the authority of the book does not depend on the wording of any one translation. For Christians brought up to believe in verbal inspiration, this may come as something of a shock. The actual words of the Bible, even the words of the Pentateuch or Torah, were not definitively fixed in the time of Christ.

The phenomenon of re-written scriptures.

The fluidity of the biblical text is related to another phenomenon that figures prominently in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Beginning about the late third or second century BCE, it became popular to write paraphrases of biblical books, often introducing new ideas in the process.[13] These rewritings could serve various purposes. The Aramaic *Genesis Apocryphon*, one of the initial scrolls found in Qumran Cave 1, is an entertaining account of some episodes of Genesis that includes an expanded description of the beauty of Sarah, wife of Abraham. In other cases, the rewritten scriptures lay claim to the status of revelation, and their relation to the traditional scriptures becomes problematic.

A particularly clear case of rewritten scripture is provided by the *Book of Jubilees*. This text was preserved in full in Ethiopic, and was regarded as scripture in the Ethiopian church. Fragments of the Hebrew original were found at Qumran. It is believed to date from the second century BCE. It is a paraphrase of Genesis and the first part of Exodus, with a definite theological message. The laws of Moses were already observed by the patriarchs in Genesis, and the true calendar was the solar one, with 364 days. *Jubilees*, however, sometimes refers to what had been revealed in "the first Torah," and so it clearly was not trying to replace the traditional Torah, only to supplement and interpret it.[14] Nonetheless, it is cited as an authoritative text in the *Damascus Document*, and it later became canonical in the Ethiopian church.

The situation was different with the *Temple Scroll*. This too was a rewriting of a part of the Torah, but in this case there was no acknowledgement of "the first Torah," and the reformulated laws were presented as divine revelation.[15] The *Temple Scroll*

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[13] For overviews see Daniel L. Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts. Strategies for Extending the Scriptures* (London and New York: Clark, 2007); Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Molly M. Zahn, "Rewritten Scripture," in Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 323–336.

[14] James C. VanderKam, "Moses Trumping Moses: Making the Book of Jubilees," in S. Metso, H. Najman and E. Schuller, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) 25–44.

[15] For a recent study of the compositional technique of the *Temple Scroll* see Bernard M. Lev-

does not repeat everything that is found in the laws of the Pentateuch. It does not, for example, include the ten commandments. But for the matters it does address (largely matters relating to the purity of the Temple, but also some laws from Deuteronomy), it claims the highest imaginable authority. When it was first published, some scholars thought that this was "the Torah of Qumran," the special sectarian edition of the Law. In fact, however, citations of the Torah in the Scrolls generally conform to the traditional text, not to the *Temple Scroll*. If the authors of the *Temple Scroll* wanted it to be accepted as the official Torah, they failed. Nonetheless, several copies of it were preserved among the Scrolls.

An even more problematic case is that of a text known as *4QReworked Pentateuch*.[16] This title refers to a set of five fragmentary manuscripts, that were originally thought to pertain to the same text. They are now regarded as five separate compositions. Compared with the MT, all five show major expansions. For example, the "song of Miriam" in Exod 15:21 was filled out in a way that has no parallel in the MT. Material is also rearranged in some cases. There is no indication, however, that this material records a new revelation. The differences over against the MT are typical of the proto-Samaritan tradition. Increasingly, scholars have come to regard these fragments not as "Reworked Pentateuch" or "Rewritten Bible," but simply as a variant edition of the Book of Exodus. Here again it seems that scribes were not bound by any official, standard, form of the text in the last centuries before the turn of the era.

A biblical canon?

Strictly speaking, it is anachronistic to speak of a Bible at Qumran or in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Bible as we know it had not yet taken its final shape. That did not happen until the late first century CE, or possibly later. Nonetheless, there existed by the first century BCE a corpus of authoritative Scriptures, shared across sectarian lines, even though its extent had not been decided definitively.[17]

Most important in this regard is the testimony of 4QMMT. When a sectarian leader appealed to the High Priest to acknowledge the sectarian interpretation of certain laws, he wrote:

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inson, *A More Perfect Torah. At the Intersection of Philology and Hermeneutics in Deuteronomy and the Temple Scroll* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013).

[16] Molly M. Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture: Composition and Exegesis in the 4Q Reworked Pentateuch Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[17] On the question of the canon see now Timothy H. Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; New Haven: Yale, 2013); idem, "Authoritative Scriptures in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Lim and Collins, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 303–22.

We have written to you that you may study the book of Moses and the books of the Prophets and David …[18]

"David" here means the Book of Psalms, which was often read as a prophetic text.[19] This passage in 4QMMT shows that the sectarians accepted the same basic scriptures as the High Priest, and even as their opponents, the Pharisees. The Law and the Prophets, or the Law, the Prophets and David, were the scriptures shared by all Judeans in the first century BCE.

The traditional Hebrew Bible contains a third category besides the Law and the Prophets – the Writings or Kethuvim. The earliest evidence for this division is found in the Greek translation of the Book of Ben Sira, by his grandson, in the late second century BCE. In the prologue to the translation the grandson says:

So my grandfather Jesus, who had devoted himself especially to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors … was himself also led to write something pertaining to wisdom and instruction.

This passage has often been taken as evidence that the three-part canon of scripture was already established by the end of the second century BCE. In fact, it indicates that the Law and the Prophets were well established categories. "The other books," however, was an open-ended category of edifying literature. Ben Sira fancied that he himself could contribute to it.

When 4QMMT was published, some scholars thought it provided evidence for a three part canon: the Law, the Prophets, and David. A fragmentary mention of "generations" was sometimes read as a reference to the books of Chronicles, and thought to imply that the whole Hebrew canon as we know it was included. This is not convincing, however. It is clear that both the sect and its opponents regarded the Torah, the Prophets and Psalms, in some form, as authoritative, but that was the extent of the shared scriptures in the early first century BCE.

The word "canon" means measuring-stick. It was applied to the scriptures by the Christian Church Fathers. There was no such term in Hebrew, but the idea of a corpus of authoritative scriptures was certainly present by the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It has often been pointed out that every book of the Hebrew Bible except the Book of Esther has been found at Qumran, with the implication that they were all recognized as authoritative scriptures. But the situation is somewhat more complicated than this.

A huge corpus of supposedly revelatory texts was found at Qumran. It is difficult to know how these texts were regarded by the people who read them. Some texts (such as the *Books of Enoch*) that did not become part of the traditional Hebrew canon were preserved in multiple copies. Some books that did become canonical,

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[18] 4QMMT C 10. Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4.V. Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah* (DJD 10; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 58–9.

[19] Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon*, 127, argues that the reference is to "the deeds of David" rather than to the Psalms.

such as Chronicles, are barely represented. If we judge by the number of copies preserved, such books as *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* were more important to the sectarians than Proverbs or Qoheleth.

In short, the Dead Sea Scrolls attest to a collection of authoritative scriptures that overlaps to a great degree with the later Bible of the rabbis. It was substantially the same in the Torah and the Prophets, although the status of some works, such as the *Temple Scroll* and *Jubilees* is unclear. The Essenes may have had a larger collection of prophets and other writings than the authorities in the Jerusalem Temple or the Pharisees; they did not have a smaller one. The whole category of "Writings" was ill-defined. It is clear that the sectarians valued many writings that claimed to be revelatory, but that were not included in the rabbinic Bible. Only in the period after 70 CE, in the writings of the historian Josephus and in *4 Ezra*, an apocalypse written about 100 CE, do we find authoritative sacred writings limited to a specific number. Josephus says that 22 books were properly accredited (*Against Apion*, 1.39). *4 Ezra* gives the number as 24 (probably the same books counted differently), but it also refers to 70 hidden books which contained even greater wisdom. It may be that Josephus's list of 22 books had been defined before 70, either by the Pharisees or by the Temple authorities, but there is no evidence of such a limitation in the Scrolls, and it was evidently not universally accepted.

The Scrolls and Judaism

Prior to the discovery of the Scrolls, our knowledge of Judaism in the land of Israel between the Maccabees and the Mishnah was heavily dependent on the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. While some of these texts were composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, they only survived in translations, transmitted in the Christian churches. Consequently there was always some question as to their validity as expressions of Second Temple Judaism. George Foot Moore chided Wilhelm Bousset and R. H. Charles for their focus on texts that were not accepted as authoritative by the Jewish tradition. Bousset argued, with some justification, that his critics' concerns were theological rather than historical. [20]

The Dead Sea Scrolls went some way towards resolving this controversy. The discovery of fragments of *1 Enoch* in Aramaic and of *Jubilees* in Hebrew showed beyond doubt that these were indeed Jewish, pre-Christian, works, and that suspicion of authenticity because of Christian transmission was unfounded. Moreover, they brought to light a host of related apocalyptic works (*Pseudo-Daniel*, *Pseu-*

[20] See my essay, "Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship," in John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, ed., *Early Judaism. A Comprehensive Overview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 1–29. George Foot Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14(1921) 197–254; Wilhelm Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit und Schriftgelehrtentum: Antwort auf Herrn Perles' Kritik meiner 'Religion des Judentums im N. T. Zeitalter'* (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1903).

do-Ezekiel, *Pseudo-Jeremiah* etc.) that showed that apocalyptic literature was not as marginal a phenomenon as some had assumed. (Since many of these works are very fragmentary, their significance has not yet been fully appreciated). Indeed, the initial impression created by the Scrolls, on the basis of the *Instruction on the Two Spirits* in 1QS and the *War Scroll*, was of an extreme form of apocalyptic dualism, that went beyond anything known from the Hebrew Bible. This dualism of Light and Darkness remains something of an anomaly, since it is clearly related to Persian dualism and is confined to a small number of texts in the Scrolls.[21] But it gave substance to the claim of Frank Cross that the Essenes were the bearers and in no small part the creators of apocalyptic tradition. That claim was somewhat over-stated. The Essenes were not the only creators or transmitters of apocalyptic traditions. But the Scrolls provide ample evidence that the kind of apocalyptic and eschatological speculations found in apocalyptic literature, and cherished by early Christians, were at home in Judaism around the turn of the era.

This picture was complicated, however, by the ongoing publication of the Scrolls. The single text that has done most to change scholarly views of pre-Christian Judaism is 4QMMT (*Miqsat Maᶜase ha-Torah*, "Some of the Works of the Law") also known as the Halakic Letter (or letter about religious law). The text is not actually in the form of a letter, but it seems to be a treatise addressed to a leader of Israel, presumably a High Priest, urging him to accept the writer's interpretation of the Law rather than that of a third party. It concludes by telling him that if he does this, it "will be counted as a virtuous deed of yours, since you will be doing what is righteous and good in His eyes, for your own welfare and for the welfare of Israel." It was presented at the first International Conference on Biblical Archaeology, in Jerusalem, in April 1984, by John Strugnell and Elisha Qimron.[22] In the view of Strugnell and Qimron, this text was "a letter from the Teacher of Righteousness to the Wicked Priest," and it outlined the fundamental issues between the sect and the authorities in Jerusalem. One passage stated explicitly: "we have separated ourselves from the multitude of the people … and from being involved with these matters and from participating with [them] in all these things."

Part of the text dealt with the religious calendar. (There is some dispute as to whether this part of the text is a separate document). The importance of the calendar for the sect had been recognized early on. In the commentary on Habakkuk, we are told that the Wicked Priest confronted the Teacher on "the Day of Atonement, his Sabbath of rest." Since it is unlikely that the (wicked) High Priest would have staged this confrontation on the day when he himself was celebrating the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), it was evident that the two figures observed different cultic calendars. The Scrolls generally attest to a solar calendar of 364 days, whereas the

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[21] See my discussion in *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A Biography*, 147–60.

[22] For a colorful account of the presentation see Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994) xvii–xviii.

traditional calendar observed in the Temple was a lunar calendar of 354 days. Most scholars agree that calendrical difference was a major reason why the sect had to withdraw from the Temple. The solar calendar is found already in the *Temple Scroll* and in *Jubilees*, both of which are likely to have been written before the sect actually broke off. Differences could simmer for a time, but eventually they led to action.

The main body of 4QMMT, however, deals with some 20 issues bearing on holiness and purity, sacrifice and tithing, forbidden sexual unions, and the like. In each case, the view of the author's group ("we") is contrasted with that of another group ("they"). For example:

> concerning liquid streams: we are of the opinion that they are not pure, and that these streams do not act as a separative between impure and pure. For the liquid of the streams and that of the vessel which receives them are alike, (being) a single liquid.

So a stream of liquid that is being poured into an unclean vessel is itself impure. From the viewpoint of Christian scholars, and indeed of many modern Jews, many of these issues seem trivial, but for the author and his opponents these matters determined whether the Law was being properly observed.

Several of the issues discussed in 4QMMT appear again in rabbinic literature. The views of the opponents (the "they" group) generally correspond to those of the rabbis, and consequently were those of the rabbis' predecessors, the Pharisees. In some cases, the views espoused in the Scroll correspond to those of the Sadducees.[23] This does not necessarily prove that the author and his group were Sadducees, but that they had a similar approach to the Law. In all cases, the views of the "we" group are stricter than those of their opponents. While 4QMMT does not explain how the author arrived at his positions, the issue was evidently the correct interpretation of the Torah of Moses. The author appeals to the addressee to study the book of Moses and the books of the Prophets and the writings of David. It may well be that the sectarians believed that the true interpretation of the Law had been revealed to them, but if so the revelation came in the course of their study.

There are other indications in the Scrolls that the sect, presumably the Essenes, was at odds with the Pharisees, whom they called "seekers after smooth things." What became clear from 4QMMT was that these disputes about religious law were the primary factor in the separation of the sect, not only from the Pharisees but from the rest of society. In fact, this might already have been inferred from the *Damascus Document*, which says that God had revealed to the sect the hidden things in which Israel had gone astray. These "hidden things" included the cultic calendar, but also "the three nets of Belial" (CD 4): fornication, riches, and profanation of the Temple. On each of these matters, the sect held a different interpretation of the Law from that of the authorities who controlled the Temple. Again in CD 6 we are told that the members of the new covenant

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[23] Y. Sussmann, "Appendix 1: The History of the Halakha and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Qimron and Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4. V* (DJD 10) 179–200.

shall take care to act according to the exact interpretation of the Law during the age of wickedness … They shall distinguish between clean and unclean, and shall proclaim the difference between holy and profane. They shall keep the Sabbath day according to its exact interpretation, and the feasts and the Day of Fasting according to the finding of the members of the New Covenant in the land of Damascus. They shall set aside the holy things according to the exact teaching concerning them.

It is clear from such passages as this that the exact interpretation of the Law was the *raison d'être* of the sect. Only when 4QMMT became known, however, was this fact fully appreciated.

4QMMT may also give us a better idea of when this sect broke off from the rest of Judaism. When would a sectarian leader have been likely to appeal to the High Priest to adopt his group's rulings rather than those of the Pharisees? The Pharisees were embroiled in conflicts especially in the early first century BCE. They clashed especially with Alexander Jannaeus, the Hasmonean king who ruled from 103 to 76 BCE. At one point the Pharisees led a revolt against him, on the grounds that he was not fit to be High Priest, and he responded by having some 6,000 people killed. He later crucified some 800 of his opponents. On his deathbed, however, he advised his queen Salome Alexandra to make peace with the Pharisees. She did so, and entrusted them with the government. According to Josephus

she permitted the Pharisees to do as they liked in all matters, and also commanded the people to obey them; and whatever regulations, introduced by the Pharisees in accordance with the tradition of their fathers, had been abolished by her father-in-law Hyrcanus, these she again restored. And so, while she had the title of sovereign, the Pharisees had the power (*Ant* 13. 408–9).

She appointed Hyrcanus II High Priest and he served in that capacity until 67 BCE. He later had a second term from 63–40. We should not be surprised if the reversal of royal attitude towards the Pharisees and their rulings provoked a protest from the other sects. This is perhaps the time in Hasmonean history when a High Priest was most likely to take action against people who were contesting the Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah. Josephus says that the Pharisees tried to persuade the queen to kill those who had urged Alexander to put the eight hundred to death, and that they themselves assassinated some of them. We are told in a commentary on Psalms found at Qumran that the Wicked (High) Priest tried to kill the Teacher. This struggle for sectarian hegemony provides a plausible context for the conflict about the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law, when both sides would have sought the endorsement and support of the High Priest.[24] In fact, the great bulk of the historical references in the Scrolls refer to people and events in the first half of the first century BCE.[25] In contrast, there is no evidence of sectarian conflict in the middle of the

[24] Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 88–121.

[25] Michael O. Wise, "Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the *Floruit* of His Movement," *JBL* 122(2003) 53–87.

second century BCE (the time of Jonathan Maccabee), which had been, and in some circles still is, presumed to be the time of the Teacher and the Wicked Priest.[26]

The sect described in the Scrolls did not come into being because it believed in the coming of the messiah or the final battle between the sons of Light and the sons of Darkness. It came into being because of disagreements with other Jews on the exact interpretation of the Law, the proper cultic calendar and the state of the Temple cult. The fact that it had so many irreconcilable differences with other Jews, however, called for explanation. One way of explaining the situation was to suppose that God had hardened the hearts of their opponents, for his own mysterious purposes, and assigned them to the lot of the Spirit of Darkness. It could not be that God would allow error to triumph indefinitely. He must bring an end to it, and soon. Not only must the other Jews who were children of darkness be overthrown, but also the Romans, the Kittim, who were desecrating the land. Hence the need for a final battle in which God would eliminate the forces of evil.

It would not be enough that truth and justice prevail in the public order. Individuals must also be punished or rewarded for their deeds. The fact that a judgment is expected, however, does not in itself tell one what conduct is approved. In the case of the Scrolls, right conduct depended on right interpretation of the Law. Early Christianity would have a view of the world that was largely similar, insofar as this world was passing away and would be subject to judgment, but the criteria for the judgment would be quite different, and reflect a different evaluation of the Law, especially its ritual aspects.

The Scrolls and Christianity

I turn finally to the relevance of the Scrolls for Christian origins. This is the area of scholarship that has suffered most from wild speculation. In the 1950's André Dupont-Sommer claimed that the Teacher of Righteousness had been crucified and rose from the dead, and so prefigured Jesus.[27] This claim that was further sensationalized by John Allegro in the 1950's,[28] and revived by the British authors Baigent and Leigh in the 1990's.[29] Variants of this attempt to find a "messiah before Jesus" were put forward a little more than a decade ago by Michael Wise and Israel

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[26] E.g. Hanan Eshel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 29–61; James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 132.

[27] A. Dupont-Sommer, *Aperçus préliminaries sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1950).

[28] Judith Ann Brown, *John Marco Allegro, The Maverick of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 77.

[29] Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991).

Knohl.[30] Wise's theory to be sure was far less sensational than that of Allegro. He pointed out, correctly, that the speaker in some of the Thanksgiving Hymns, or Hodayot, seemed to model himself on the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. Wise construed this as a messianic claim, which is doubtful, but at least the allusions to the Suffering Servant were well founded. Knohl's thesis was more far-fetched, and was based on a fanciful interpretation of a fragmentary text in which the speaker claims to have a throne in heaven, later supported by the *Vision of Gabriel*, a controversial text written in stone, of uncertain provenance.[31] Knohl argued that these texts attested a belief in a messianic figure who died and rose again, a few decades before Jesus. His reading of these texts, however, has found little support.[32]

The attempt to find an exact prototype for Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls has fascinated people repeatedly for more than 60 years. The fascination of this mirage is obviously theological or ideological, but its implications are not at all clear: if Knohl were right, would this undermine the credibility of Christianity? or enhance it by showing that such ideas were grounded in Judaism? would it redound to the glory of Judaism, by showing the Jewish origin of influential ideas? or would it tarnish that glory by showing that some of the more "mythological" aspects of Christianity were at home in Judaism too? Or should it have any bearing on our judgments about Judaism or Christianity at all? What is clear is that the desire to prove, or disprove, claims that are thought to be fraught with theological significance, can only distort the work of the historian.

In fact, messianic expectation is one of the areas where the Scrolls have shed some light on early Christianity. Two examples may suffice. One is the so-called *Aramaic Apocalypse*, or *Son of God text*, 4Q246, which speaks of a figure of whom it is said: "Son of God he shall be called, and they will name him Son of the Most High."[33] This text immediately brings to mind the story of the Annuciation in the Gospel of Luke. There the angel Gabriel tells Mary:

> And now you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David … the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

Both texts also use the phrase "will be great" and speak of everlasting dominion.

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[30] Michael O. Wise, *The First Messiah* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999); Israel M. Knohl, *The Messiah before Jesus: The Suffering Servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

[31] On the *Vision of Gabriel,* see Matthias Henze, ed., *Hazon Gabriel. New Readings of the Gabriel Revelation* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011).

[32] See my essays, "A Messiah Before Jesus," and "An Essene Messiah? Comments on Israel Knohl, The Messiah Before Jesus" in John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans, ed., *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 15–35 and 37–44 respectively.

[33] John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star. Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 171–90.

The interpretation of this text has been controversial. J. T. Milik argued that the figure who is called Son of God was not a Jewish messiah, but rather a Syrian king, probably Alexander Balas, a second century BCE ruler who referred to himself on his coins as *theopator*, divinely begotten. That interpretation was not well received when Milik proposed it in a lecture at Harvard in 1972, but it subsequently won a following, although its proponents usually favor a different pagan ruler. By far the closest parallel, however, is found in the passage in Luke, where these titles are explicitly messianic. Scholars have been strangely reluctant to acknowledge this parallel, because it is found in the New Testament. I would not want to suggest that resistance to recognizing this figure as the messiah is entirely due to theological considerations, specifically a desire to protect the uniqueness of Jesus as the messianic Son of God, but such theological considerations have not been entirely absent.[34]

Another intriguing parallel to the New Testament is provided by a larger Hebrew fragment designated 4Q521 and sometimes dubbed "the messianic apocalypse," which begins: "heaven and earth will obey his messiah."[35] The passage goes on to say:

> The glorious things that have not taken place the Lord will do as he s[aid] for he will heal the wounded, give life to the dead and preach good news to the poor …

This text brings to mind a passage in the Gospel of Matthew 11:

> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.

Both the Qumran text and the Gospel draw on Isaiah 61:1, where the prophet says:

> The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners …

(This text is famously read by Jesus in the Capernaum synagogue, in Luke 4:18). The Isaianic text does not mention raising the dead, and this suggests that the Gospel and the Qumran text had at least a further tradition in common.

In the Qumran text, it is God who is said to heal the wounded, give life to the dead and preach good news to the poor. It is very odd, however, to have God preaching the good news: that was the work of a prophet or herald. Moreover, neither Isaiah 61 nor Matthew 11 has God as the subject. In Isaiah, the agent is an anointed prophet. The suspicion arises, then, that God is also thought to act through an agent in 4Q521, specifically, the "messiah" or anointed one whom heaven and earth obey. This messiah, however, is not a warrior king, but rather a prophetic "messiah" whose actions

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[34] See further my comments in *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A Biography*, 114.

[35] Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 131–41.

resemble those of Elijah and Elisha, both of whom were said to have raised dead people to life. If this is correct, then this Qumran text throws some genuine light on the career of Jesus, who certainly resembled Elijah more than a warrior king.

The Scrolls have filled out to a great degree our knowledge of messianic expectation in the Second Temple period. Such expectation was almost entirely lacking in the apocalypses of the Maccabean period (Enoch and Daniel) where we might have expected to find it. It revived in the Hasmonean period, first in reaction to the Hasmonean appropriation of the monarchy, which some Jews regarded as illegitimate, and then in reaction to Roman rule. The Scrolls show that more than one kind of messiah was expected. The most widespread hope was for a kingly warrior who would drive out the Romans and restore the kingdom of David, but there were also hopes for a priestly messiah and for a messianic prophet. One of the enigmas of the New Testament is how Jesus of Nazareth came to be identified as the militant kingly messiah. The (admittedly rare) attestation of a prophetic messiah in the Scrolls raises the intriguing possibility that he may originally have been identified as a different kind of messiah, as a wonder-working prophet.

Messianism, of course, is only one of many areas where the Scrolls shed light on the New Testament. The Scrolls provide a context for debates about such matters as divorce and Sabbath observance, which were of concern to all Jews at the time. Sapiential texts found at Qumran contrast flesh and spirit in ways similar to what we find in the Pauline letters. Another wisdom text contains a list of Beatitudes, which are similar at least in form to the Sermon on the Mount, although the details are quite different. 4QMMT, the treatise on "some of the works of the Law" that sets out the points on which the sect differed from other Jews has been invoked as a parallel for what Paul means by "works of the Law". A document about a heavenly figure named Melchizedek provides a possible background for enigmatic references to Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Examples could be multiplied. Very seldom is it possible to argue that a New Testament writer was influenced by a specific text found at Qumran. The point is rather that both movements drew on the same cultural and religious tradition, and often understood their sacred texts in similar ways, or raised similar questions about them.

If we look at the *Gestalt* of the two movements, however, the differences are at least as striking as the similarities. Both movements expected the coming (or second coming) of a messiah (or messiahs) and believed that actions in this life would determine salvation or damnation in the next. The scenario envisioned in the War Scroll is not so far removed from that of the Book of Revelation. Both envisage a violent confrontation between the forces of good and those of evil, and the eventual destruction of the latter. But the kind of conduct that is thought lead to salvation in the two movements is fundamentally different. In the Scrolls, the emphasis is on attaining and maintaining a state of purity, and this is achieved by separating from "the men of the pit," which is to say from the rest of society. Jesus, and even more so Paul, in contrast, downplayed the importance of the ritual laws. According to Jesus,