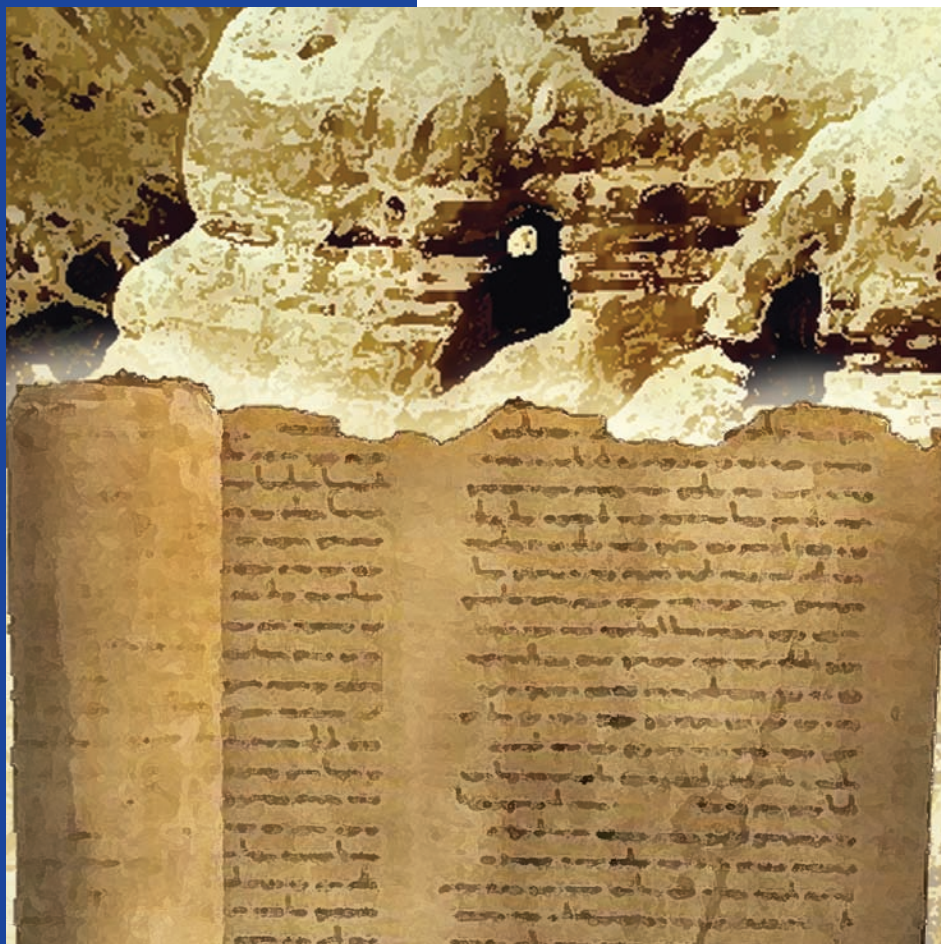


THE MODERN SCHOLAR

GREAT PROFESSORS TEACHING YOU!

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: THE TRUTH BEHIND THE MYSTIQUE COURSE GUIDE



Professor Lawrence H. Schiffman
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Truth Behind the Mystique

Professor Lawrence H. Schiffman
New York University



Recorded Books™ is a trademark of
Recorded Books, LLC. All rights reserved.

The Dead Sea Scrolls:
The Truth Behind the Mystique



Executive Producer
John J. Alexander

Executive Editor
Donna F. Carnahan

RECORDING

Producer - David Markowitz
Director - Matthew Cavnar

COURSE GUIDE

Editor - James Gallagher
Karen Sparrough
Design - Edward White

Lecture content ©2007 by Lawrence H. Schiffman
Course guide ©2007 by Recorded Books, LLC
Cover image: © Joseph Calev/shutterstock.com

©2007 by Recorded Books, LLC

#UT102 ISBN: 978-1-4281-5625-8

All beliefs and opinions expressed in this audio/video program and accompanying course guide are those of the author and not of Recorded Books, LLC, or its employees.

Course Syllabus

The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Truth Behind the Mystique

About Your Professor	4
Introduction.....	5
Lecture 1 The Library of Qumran	6
Lecture 2 Scandal and Publication	12
Lecture 3 Sects of the Second Temple Period.....	17
Lecture 4 The Halakhic Letter and the Founding of the Sect.....	22
Lecture 5 The Qumran Sect	27
Lecture 6 Women and the Dead Sea Scrolls Sect.....	32
Lecture 7 Theology and Beliefs of the Dead Sea Sect	37
Lecture 8 Biblical Interpretation	42
Lecture 9 The Hebrew Bible in Second Temple Times.....	46
Lecture 10 The Messiah and the End of Days	51
Lecture 11 The Temple Scroll	56
Lecture 12 The Scrolls, Judaism, and Christianity	62
Lecture 13 Controversial Messianic Texts.....	67
Lecture 14 The Scrolls in Public Culture	72
Course Materials	77



About Your Professor

Lawrence H. Schiffman

Lawrence H. Schiffman is chairman of New York University's Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and serves as Ethel and Irvin A. Edelman Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. He is also a member of the University's Centers for Ancient Studies and Near Eastern Studies. He is a past president of the Association for Jewish Studies. He currently serves as editor-in-chief of the Center for Online Judaic Studies in New York.

Professor Schiffman was featured in the PBS *Nova* television series documentary, "Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls," as well as in four BBC documentaries on the scrolls, the McNeil-Lehrer program, and a Discovery special. He appears regularly in the popular educational series "Mysteries of the Bible," which appears on Arts and Entertainment (A&E), and he appeared in *Kingdom of David* on PBS.

Professor Schiffman received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University. He is a specialist in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Judaism in late antiquity, the history of Jewish law, and Talmudic literature. His publications include *The Halakhah at Qumran* (E.J. Brill, 1975); *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code* (Scholars Press, 1983); *Who Was a Jew? Rabbinic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism* (Ktav, 1985); *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Ktav, 1991); a Hebrew book entitled *Halakhah, Halikhah u-Meshihuyut be-Khat Midbar Yehudah (Law, Custom, and Messianism in the Dead Sea Sect)* (Merkaz Shazar, 1993); the jointly authored monograph, *Hebrew and Aramaic Magical Texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Sheffield, 1992); *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Jewish Publication Society, 1994; Doubleday paperback, in the Anchor Research Library, 1995); and almost two hundred articles on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic Judaism. His most recent book is *Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Ktav, 1998).



Introduction

This series of lectures sets before the public the real Dead Sea Scrolls, our most important collection of Jewish texts from the centuries before the rise of Christianity. Only through efforts to understand what the scrolls can teach us about the history of Judaism is it possible for us to learn what they have to teach us about the history of Christianity, because Christianity came into being only after these texts were composed and copied. Despite many false claims to the contrary, the scrolls do not mention John the Baptist or Jesus, because they are Jewish texts composed before the rise of Christianity. Rather, they illuminate the Judaism of the period after the composition of the Hebrew Scriptures and before the solidification of postbiblical Judaism and the rise of Christianity.

Although this description of the scrolls collection may seem obvious, its full implications for the understanding of both Judaism and Christianity have only recently been recognized. The popular press remains far behind the scholars who, despite disagreements on many specific matters of interpretation, have reached virtual consensus on this central point. In fact, the media continue to provide a forum for exaggerated and irresponsible claims that the scrolls belong primarily to the Christian domain or that they represent the normative Judaism of the Jerusalem Temple, both patently incorrect. Numerous books have come out advocating theories of the scrolls that are incompatible with the texts and the archaeological evidence. To a great extent, we can attribute such unfounded series to the unfortunate veil of secrecy that long surrounded the scrolls. But the monopoly of the original publication team has been completely lifted for some time, and responsible and intelligent syntheses such as that proposed here are becoming the norm. It is my hope that these recordings will enable listeners to draw their own conclusions about the Dead Sea Scrolls, perhaps the most important archaeological discovery of the twentieth century.

Lecture 1: The Library of Qumran

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, introduction and chapters 1 through 3.

A Discovery of Immeasurable Import

The Dead Sea Scrolls are arguably the most important find of the twentieth century. These scrolls illuminate the history of Western civilization and religious tradition in a way that is immeasurable, and they provide valuable insights into the background of Christianity and the development of Judaism.

The average discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls begins with what has become a kind of foundation myth: A young Bedouin goatherd wandering near a place called Qumran threw a stone into a cave while looking for one of his goats and discovered a group of scrolls in jars. The more important questions, however, are not how the scrolls were discovered, but what they are and what they are not, as well as the question of why they should be studied.

What Are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

First of all, most of the Dead Sea Scrolls are not really scrolls. In reality, there are about ten scrolls that can actually be rolled out on a table and read. Many of the Dead Sea Scrolls are the fragments of what were once scrolls in ancient times, but that over the years have deteriorated because of the way they lay in their cases. Today, approximately 5 to 10 percent of the original collection remains.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were an ancient library, what once upon a time was a collection of entire scrolls numbering somewhere close to nine hundred. Today, they are a small collection of complete scrolls and a large number of remnants, something like eighty thousand pieces that, when fit together, account for approximately twenty thousand pieces. These twenty thousand pieces occupy about twelve thousand of what are called plates. These used to be behind glass and are today kept in special rice paper. These are the remnants of approximately nine hundred scrolls, and because many of these are duplicates, they are the remnants of a library of some 250 texts from ancient times.

The Dating of the Scrolls

The scrolls can be dated by a number of means, including carbon-14 dating and paleography, the study of the shape of letters and the way in which writing developed. Then there is historical dating, which entails looking at the contents of the material and its language.

It appears that the scrolls were copied, a few in the third century BCE, a large number in the second and first centuries BCE, and a few in the first century CE. In terms of the actual composition of the scrolls, the earliest

scrolls are copies of the Hebrew Bible, and Hebrew Bible compositions can be dated from around 1200 BCE and on; the latest composition in the collection would be in the first century BCE. This means that the scrolls were all composed before the rise of Christianity.

The scrolls were found at a location called Qumran, which is a modern Arabic designation for a place a bit south of Jericho, along the Dead Sea, where some ruins of buildings were found that apparently were used by the sectarians who gathered the scrolls. These scrolls were then placed in caves in this area, and apparently the gathering process occurred during the period in which the buildings were occupied.

The settlement existed sometime after 134 BCE or, by another reckoning, sometime after about 100 BCE. It was destroyed in 68 CE during the Great Revolt of the Jews against Rome, which took place between 66 and 73 CE and which resulted in events that are well known today: the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE and the destruction of the last stronghold of the rebels, Masada, in 73 CE.

Some of the books in the ancient sectarian library of Qumran were a part of their religious heritage and other books were composed by them. Many of the scrolls were not composed at the sectarian settlement of Qumran, and many of them are not, in fact, compositions of the group who occupied these buildings.

What the Scrolls Are Not

The scrolls are not Christian and there is absolutely no distinctively Christian idea found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, nor in the scrolls is there even the possibility that any of them were authored after the rise of Christianity. Here and there in the scrolls are important ideas that help to explain where certain Christian ideas come from, ideas that were not previously known within the orbit of Judaism. Increasingly, whether it is in the land of Israel or the Hellenistic world, more and more Christian ideas can be traced to Jewish roots. This is one of the great contributions of modern scholarship, but it often leads people to jump to the conclusion that some of those materials that help explain the origins of Christianity are somehow Christian, and they are not. The scrolls are also not documents of third- and fourth-century Christians, as has been put forward.

There was a theory that these were documents from a medieval Jewish sect known as the Karaites, literalists who had not accepted the Talmudic interpretations of the rabbis, people who thought the Bible should be taken literally. Carbon-14 dating, however, proves they could not be responsible for the scrolls.

More recently, it was put forth that Qumran was not a sectarian center but was, in fact, a fortress. Therefore, all the manuscripts were brought from Jerusalem and represent Judaism at that time. The problem here is that this theory does not seem to take into account either the archaeology or the content of the scrolls. Archaeologically, the Qumran site just isn't a fortress, even if it has a watchtower and some security perimeter. The documents from the Qumran collection constantly argue against the Jerusalem Temple's procedures, as if these procedures were impure and not kosher. If these were the

documents of those who led the Jerusalem Temple, then one would expect to find some documents that supported the status quo.

Another assumption has been that the Qumran area was a kind of book production facility simply because a lot of books were there. There is evidence that there may have been a scriptorium, a place for the copying of manuscripts, but it is known that many of the manuscripts were brought there from elsewhere, so there is no real support for the notion that Qumran was a book factory.

Among other assumptions was that Qumran had to be a trade emporium because a small boat dock was found between the site and the Dead Sea. There is a massive cemetery between the so-called Qumran settlement and the Dead Sea, and beyond that is an area where the sea would have been in antiquity before it receded. There is evidence there of a boat dock, but the existence of a boat dock does little on its own to support the idea of Qumran as a trade emporium.

There really is little question that the so-called Qumran settlement was a religious community dedicated to the collecting and studying of a library of books, and it was a group dedicated to a life of purity and piety.

Studying the Scrolls

In the study of the scrolls, there has been an overcentralization of the actual group who lived at Qumran and who gathered the scrolls. Much of what has been studied is the nature of this group, the way of life of the group, and the archaeology of the site. But the real significance of the scrolls goes way beyond that. What should really be studied is the nature of the Judaism of the second and first centuries BCE, because what is really, really interesting is the subsequent development of both Judaism and Christianity, which form the story to a greater extent of the foundations of Western civilization.

An overconcentration on the sectarian group itself and on the Christianization of the scrolls has, curiously enough, reduced the chances of better understanding Christianity through the scrolls. The scrolls can tell an enormous amount about the background of many ideas and historical processes in early Christianity, but in order to understand these, one must distance oneself and attempt to understand what the scrolls say about the Judaism that is at the background of Christianity. Looking at the group as though they were proto-Christians has made it impossible for many scholars to use the scrolls properly to understand the background of Christianity.

When one looks at the period between the end of the storyline of the Hebrew Bible, about 450 BCE, and the period in the second and third centuries, when Judaism is becoming Talmudic Judaism and Christianity is becoming a separate religion, the scrolls represent an enormous contribution to the understanding of the history of ideas and the history of religion.

The scrolls aren't the only sources for this period either. There is also the historian Josephus, and there are books in the Apocrypha (Jewish books preserved in the Catholic Bible and in the Greek translations of what Christians call the Old Testament) and books from an informal collection called pseudo-epigrapha, the collection of books preserved in various Eastern churches that

date from the third, second, and first centuries BCE and the first century CE. When these other sources are viewed together with the Dead Sea Scrolls, the history of this period is illuminated in a magnificent way.

Who Gathered the Scrolls?

Most scholars have come to the conclusion that the sect who left the scrolls is the group called the Essenes, a sect described by a variety of Jewish authors who wrote in Greek in the first century BCE and by Josephus and Pliny the Elder, the Roman author. There are a lot of parallels between the Essenes and the Dead Sea group, and the average book on the Dead Sea Scrolls will simply say that the Dead Sea group is the Essenes or a subset of them. But the matter is more complex.

Another group to consider is the Sadducees, who were a priestly group. Parallels can be made between their views on Jewish law and those of the Qumran sect. In fact, the Qumran sect may have originated from a group of pious Sadducees.

There are about twenty theories about what the word “Essene” means. We don’t really know what these people were called, and the name “Essene” doesn’t appear anywhere in the Dead Sea Scrolls. “Essene” could even be a term for a collection of sectarian groups that have a lot in common.

One cannot simply assume the identity of the Qumran group from the descriptions of the Essenes among Jewish authors and in Pliny. Even so, the Qumran group is strongly parallel in many ways to the sect of the Essenes. At the same time, one should also caution against the assumption that the Essenes can be viewed as proto-Christians. This assumption ignores fundamental differences between the Qumran group and the early Christians. For instance, the sectarian scrolls encourage hatred of outsiders and sinners, an approach that is negated both by Pharasaic Judaism and its ethics and also negated by early Christianity, which to a great extent drew its ethics from the Pharasaic tradition.

The Materials in the Library

The scrolls collection can be divided into three parts: first, biblical scrolls, texts previously known from the Hebrew scriptures.

Second are texts called apocryphal, which doesn’t refer to the Apocrypha, but rather to books about the Bible, like the Bible, or imitative of the Bible. Both of these types of works are a window into the way Jews in third-, second-, and first-century Judea understood and studied the Bible.

These two types of works, Hebrew Bible and apocryphal-type texts, are not unique to the group who occupied the settlement at Qumran and collected the scrolls. In fact, these are texts that were spread throughout the Jewish community in Judea and would have been read by Jews in Hebrew and in some cases in Greek. In addition, biblical and apocryphal-type texts were also found at Masada.

The third type of text in the Qumran collection is unique to the collection and is what are called sectarian texts. These are documents that have the distinctive ideas and terminology of the Qumran sectarians and were com-

posed by them, and they are the most likely of the collection to have been copied at Qumran.

These three classes of documents make up the library of the Qumran sectarians. It's important to note that this was a library and the books were actively used. They got worn down and had to be fixed, sometimes by second and third and even fourth scribes. They show evidence that sometimes they were rewound properly, and sometimes they weren't.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What are the main categories of literature in the collection we call the Dead Sea Scrolls?
2. How do we know that the Dead Sea Scrolls are pre-Christian?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 2: Scandal and Publication

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapters 2 and 3.

The Famous Bedouin Boy

The first Dead Sea Scroll was not found in 1947 by the famous Bedouin boy looking for his missing goat. It was actually found much earlier.

Beginning in the late 1800s, fragments of Hebrew manuscripts from a synagogue in Old Cairo began to become known in Europe. Solomon Schechter, who found out about the scrolls in 1896 and who was a faculty member at Cambridge University, decided that he would journey to this synagogue, known as the Ben Ezra Synagogue, and recover the rest of the manuscripts.

Among these texts was a document that Schechter recognized as being from the Second Temple period, a book known as Ben Sira, or Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus.

Schechter acquired the collection, some 250,000 items of incredible importance to the history of Hebrew and Judaic literature. As Schechter delved into these materials, he found a document that is now generally referred to as the Damascus Document.

This text would later be found in ten copies among the fragmentary manuscripts from Qumran. Schechter had thereby succeeded in finding what was essentially the first Dead Sea Scroll in 1897.

Some thought these materials belonged to early Christians. Some thought they were the documents of the Zadokites, referring to a group similar to the Sadducees. Others claimed that the fragments Schechter had found were Karaite manuscripts. Others thought that these were proto-Rabbinic Pharisaic documents. In any case, this debate went on from Schechter's publication in 1911 until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947. The debate, however, was interrupted by World War II and the Holocaust, which all but froze biblical and Judaic studies.

These studies reopened immediately in 1947 when the Bedouin boy entered the cave at Qumran looking for a missing animal from his flock and found the seven complete scrolls. The story of the Bedouin boy is a bit more complex, however, than its retelling would imply.

The Sale of the Seven

The Bedouin boy's name was Mohammad Adib (Mohammad the Wolf), and he was part of a clan of Bedouins known as Ta'amireh, who were heavily involved in the antiquities trade. The boy's immediate relations would have spent much of their time prospecting for antiquities, so it's safe to conclude that the boy was actually searching for antiquities when he found the scrolls.

Unfortunately, the boy was a poor judge of the worth of his find, for it seems that he sold the whole thing for about \$125. The sale divided the original seven scrolls into two groups, the first group of four scrolls purchased on behalf of the soon-to-be State of Israel by Eliezer Sukenik, the head of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University.

An intermediary purchased the other three and sold these to Athanasius Yeshua Samuel, the Syrian Metropolitan (bishop of the Syrian church in Jerusalem), and he eventually sold these to Yigael Yadin, the famous archaeologist who was also the son of Sukenik (Yadin had changed his name). In 1954, Yadin was able to buy the scrolls because he was in the United States on a lecture tour and there was an ad for the scrolls that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. Yadin acquired these scrolls for a quarter of a million dollars.

This placed the seven original scrolls in the hands of Israel, and they were deposited in the Shrine of the Book, where they sit today, in the Israel Museum of Jerusalem. However, what then ensued was the search for the place of origins for these manuscripts, for Qumran.

The Scandal of the Scrolls

After the first group of scrolls was acquired by Sukenik, and before the others were acquired, there ensued the 1948 war of independence of the State of Israel. This war left the region split in two. Jordan occupied what was known as the West Bank and the east part of Jerusalem, and the rest of the territory ended up in the hands of the new State of Israel. This meant that Qumran was in the hands of Jordan.

The Jordanians immediately set out to find the place from which the scrolls had come and soon located the caves of Qumran. The entire publication fight, the so-called "Scandal of the Scrolls" reported in the late 1980s and early 1990s, had nothing to do with the scrolls found by the Bedouin boy. They pertained to those scrolls found in Jordan after Jordan took control of the area after the 1948 war.

Once the Jordanians had located the place from which the scrolls had come, they began the systematic archaeological excavation of the area of Qumran under Father Roland de Vaux and G. Lankester Harding. De Vaux was a Dominican monk and an important French archaeologist who worked at the École Biblique. Harding was a Englishman who stayed in Jordan to be head of the Antiquities Department after the British mandate was eliminated with Israel's War of Independence in 1948.

While these scholars began digging at Qumran, the very same Ta'amireh Bedouins came to work at the excavations. When the archaeologists would go home for the weekend, Ta'amireh would go into the caves searching for more manuscripts to sell to a fellow nicknamed Kando, who was the very same antiquities dealer who had been involved in the buying and selling of the original seven scrolls.

In September 1952, Caves 4 and 6 were found. It was Cave 4 that would yield some 550 to six hundred fragmentary manuscripts.

Throughout the early 1950s, there was a constant stream of manuscript fragments that the Bedouins sold to Kando, which Kando then sold to the

Palestine Archaeological Museum in East Jerusalem, which is now the Rockefeller Museum.

De Vaux and Harding set up a process to sort and publish the material. After trying to have some of de Vaux's colleagues at the École Biblique do the job, it became clear that a larger publication team for this material was needed.

A group of Christian scholars, Catholics and Protestants, was assembled. At this time, Jordan was free of Jews, and the idea of having Jews participate in this process was absolutely impossible. It also seems that some of those involved in the initial process were anti-Semites who sought to keep Jews out of the process. But to be fair, others were upstanding scholars who kept close relations throughout with Jewish and Israeli scholars.

The notion that this initial group was only Catholic is not true, and it should also be noted that the Vatican had nothing to do with the process. The rumor that the Vatican kept the scrolls secret is simply unfounded. However, it is also true that of the Protestants who got involved in the beginning, one became agnostic, one converted to Catholicism, and one withdrew from the process. So by the end, the project was overwhelmingly Catholic.

Those involved sorted the manuscripts according to handwriting, composition, and genre, but what they were not able to do was publish the whole lot. This situation dragged on until the 1967 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. This war caused a transfer of territory, including Qumran and the Rockefeller Museum, to Israeli hands.

Toward Publication

After 1967, one would have expected that the Israelis would have brought in their own people to get the material published, but this didn't happen. A series of false commitments was made by the publication team and then there was a dragging out of the entire situation. But an important thing happened during the 1967 war that would bring about a new approach to the Dead Sea Scrolls and a completely different recognition of their significance.

In 1960, Reverend Joseph Uhrig contacted Yigael Yadin and told him that he had a then-unknown Dead Sea Scroll. He asked Yadin for a deposit of ten thousand dollars and in return provided a few fragments of the scroll. After Yadin gave him the money and received the fragments, Uhrig disappeared.

In May of 1967, the antiquities dealer Kando somehow managed to have a meeting with Frank Cross of Harvard, an important Dead Sea Scrolls scholar, and tried to sell him this very same scroll, now known as the Temple Scroll, under a bridge in Lebanon. Cross couldn't buy the scroll because he couldn't legally export it from Israel.

By the time the 1967 war started in June, Yadin knew that he had to recover this scroll. With the help of Israeli intelligence agents, he was able to persuade Kando to give up the scroll, which had been rotting under the floorboards of his home in Bethlehem. On behalf of Israel, Yadin acquired the sixty-six-column long Temple Scroll, a document that set forth a long list of Jewish laws.

This managed to energize the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. On the one hand, it emphasized the extent to which the scrolls should be understood as a source for the history of the Judaism of the time. On the other hand, this scroll showed that there was more to be done, not simply in the caves, but in terms of the documents sitting unpublished.

Still, it took a while for Yadin to publish the scroll, and after the scroll came out in a Hebrew edition, the English edition was delayed until 1983. (Yadin was heavily involved in the process of investigating the perceived failures of Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.)

Soon after the publication of the Temple Scroll, an important Israeli scholar delivered a presentation on a text that has become very important to Dead Sea Scrolls scholars. This text is abbreviated as MMT, Hebrew for “some rules and regulations for observing the Torah.” This text further showed how significant the still-unpublished scrolls were and also raised issues regarding the identity of the sect and the role of the Sadducees in its history.

Interestingly, the effect of the 1967 Israeli takeover was delayed until the 1980s when the combination of the publication of the Temple Scroll and the announcement of the MMT text made it very clear that Dead Sea Scrolls material had to be published in total. At present, every single scroll has been published.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What factors delayed the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls for so many years?
2. What led to their full publication and how was it accomplished?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 3: Sects of the Second Temple Period

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, introduction and chapter 4.

Historical Context

The period in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were collected is the period known as the Hellenistic period. In 586 BCE, the Jewish Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians, bringing to a close the First Temple period. By 540 BCE, Babylonia had been replaced by the Persian Empire as the main ruling empire of the Near East. The Persian Empire allowed some of the Jews who had been exiled to Babylonia to return to the land of Israel, and they established a Jewish commonwealth.

By 520 BCE, the Jews had rebuilt the Temple, and sometime around 450 BCE the biblical story breaks off. Judea emerged into the light of history again around the time of Alexander the Great's conquest, at what could be considered the onset of the Hellenistic period in 334 BCE. Alexander set off a new period in which the culture and civilization of the Near East would be greatly challenged by this outside, Greek-like culture, which brought with it developments in terms of government, material culture, and religious ideas.

In 311 BCE, Alexander's successors carved up the empire and effectively, from 311 to 198 BCE, the Ptolemies, ruling from Egypt, ruled over the land of Israel. When the situation changed in 198 BCE, the Seleucids, who were the rulers primarily over Syria, became the rulers over the land of Israel. All during this time, Judaism had developed in many ways. All kinds of new compositions had been written, including many Aramaic texts that are preserved at Qumran.

Jews were increasingly faced with the challenge of how to deal with this new Hellenistic culture. As a result, there seemed to have been considerable debate about how to practice Judaism in this atmosphere.

The Sect Comes into Being

It is arguable that the Dead Sea Scrolls sect came into being as an indirect result of the Maccabean Revolt of 168 to 164 BCE. Events began to heat up during the reign of Antiochus, known as Epiphanus. He ruled from 175 BCE on. During this period, there was an inner struggle among the Jewish high priests. The high priesthood was a hereditary job that was limited to members of the family of Zadok, the core of the Zadokite priesthood. Among this group, there started to be some who sought to buy the right to the high priesthood as well as the right to transform Jerusalem into a Hellenistic polis and to begin to create a greater emphasis on Hellenistic culture.

This situation became severe during the period from about 175 on because of the Hellenistic reform, an attempt to formalize such arrangements regarding the city of Jerusalem and to improve the Hellenistic education of young people. By 168 BCE, there had been considerable strife among the Jews around the question of how much to accept Hellenistic culture. In 166, Antiochus decided that the inner Jewish struggle could be resolved by him by supporting the Hellenistic forces that wanted greater Greek influence. In 166, a struggle ensued in which Antiochus initially persecuted practicing Jews and then sought to disallow Jewish practices. He faced off against the family of the Maccabees, led by Judah, who commanded the Jewish Revolt. By 164, Judah conquered Jerusalem from the Seleucids, expelling them and rededicating the Temple. This is the famous event commemorated by the lighting of the eight-branched Hanakah ("rededication") menorah.

The forces of the Seleucid empire sought to reach a compromise with the Jews whereby Judah would be expelled from power and others who were willing to accommodate Seleucid rule would take control of Jerusalem. They convinced a large number of Jews that this was the correct approach, and Judah was expelled from Jerusalem to become a guerrilla fighting against the Seleucids in the Judean hills.

In 160, Judah was killed. A struggle took place in the Seleucid empire over succession and in that struggle there were two competing groups. Each turned to Jonathan, Judah's brother, and Jonathan chose to support the weaker. He reentered Jerusalem, took control, and became high priest.

This is the environment in which the Dead Sea group developed, the Hasmonean period, from 152 to 63 BCE. The Hasmoneans blamed the Sadduceean high priesthood for having made possible the extreme Hellenization that took place in the Jerusalem Temple under the Seleucid authorities.

In the aftermath of the wars between the Maccabees and the Seleucids and in the aftermath of Jonathan's coming to power in 152, the Hasmoneans made common cause with the Pharisees to establish Pharisaic law and practice in the Temple. As a reaction, a small group of pious Sadducees went off to form the sect that became the Qumran sect, known by most scholars as the Essenes.

Under the Hasmoneans

In this period, according to the historian Josephus, there were three groups of Jews: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

The Sadducees were primarily an aristocratic group centered on a high priest. They believed some aspects of the Hellenistic world could be brought in without compromising the religion of Israel. Their name was derived from the high priest Zadok, one of Solomon's two high priests. Up until the Maccabean Revolt, the high priests were almost all Sadducees.

According to Josephus, the Sadducees were known to reject the "traditions of the fathers." The Sadducees apparently thought only the Torah was authoritative and rejected the use of other texts for law. The Sadducees were constantly set off as the opponents of the Pharisees, who were proto-

Talmudic rabbis and later became the main arbiters of Jewish tradition. Much of the distinction between these groups rests in where the authority for the law is derived.

The Sadducees rejected many of the ideas the Pharisees believed in: reward and punishment after death, immortality of the soul, and the concept of angels. The Sadducees seem to have been a major part of the society of the time, but they don't look to have ever gained as much influence as the Pharisees.

The Pharisees

The word "Pharisees" means "those who are separated," which is usually taken to refer to the fact that they separated themselves from impure foods and lived their lives as though they were observing the purity required by the Jerusalem Temple. They were scrupulous in regard to tithing the produce of the land in accord with the laws of the Torah. The Pharisees' way of conducting their group and holding their meals is parallel to that of the priests and those who will be seen in the Dead Sea sect. These Pharisees are also referred to by the Talmudic texts and the Sages. The Pharisees are often painted as those from whom the rabbis inherited their position. Hence, there is often reference to the Pharisaic Rabbinic tradition. This group was closest to the Judaism that later became the dominant form of the religion.

Under the ruler John Hyrcanus, 138 to 134 BCE, and Alexander Janneus, 133 to 126 BCE, the Pharisees entered further and further into the political arena, and the Hasmonians became more and more Hellenized. The Pharisees fought against this Hellenization.

The Pharisees were divided as to the extent they should oppose the Hellenistic rulers. After the Hasmonean period came to an end and the Romans began to rule (63 BCE), the division among the Pharisees left them also divided over whether to revolt against the Romans.

The Pharisees were drawn primarily from the lower and middle classes. They believed in the immortality of the soul, reward and punishment after death, the idea of angels, and the notion that human beings had free will. The Pharisees and Sadducees also differed over the involvement of God in human affairs and the notion of free will. The Pharisees believed God could interfere in human affairs while the Sadducees did not. The Pharisees constituted the background for what the rabbis will call the "oral law."

The Essenes

The meaning of the word "Essenes" is simply not known, though there are many theories, and the word does not appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls. But what's important is that there is much information in Philo and Josephus and Pliny about the Essenes.

Josephus and Philo picture the Essenes as living throughout the land. The notion that Qumran might be the home of the Essenes comes specifically from Pliny the Elder, who describes the Dead Sea area as if he had been there, though he probably had not been.

The Essenes had a community of as many as four thousand members and a court by which members who had transgressed could be expelled.

Members had a year of study and then could do certain ritual immersions, after which they served two years of probation. Then one made an oath and joined the group.

Josephus says the group practiced a centrally administered communal property. Josephus speaks of two types of Essenes, celibate and marrying. The Essenes didn't think the Temple was totally pure.

The group became prominent soon after the Maccabean Revolt and are heard about right up through the Great Revolt.

These three groups existed from the Hasmonean period from 152 BCE through the Roman conquest of 63. They continued to exist, especially during the period of Herodian rule, from about 40 to 4 BCE, then they continued to exist up through the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What were the main groups of Jews that existed in the Second Temple period?
2. How do the Dead Sea Scrolls add to our knowledge of these groups?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 4: The Halakhic Letter and the Founding of the Sect

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapters 5 and 6.

Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah

MMT (Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah) means "some legal rulings pertaining to the Torah." This is the text the *New York Times* editorialized about when it said the scrolls had to be totally published and that secrets could not be kept from the public with regard to important historical texts. This text had a huge effect in shaking up the field of Dead Sea Scrolls research. This text is also sometimes called the Halakhic letter, referring to Jewish law. The text deals with twenty-two questions of Jewish law. In its present literary form it is referred to as a letter, and it looks like some document that was written to be sent from the Dead Sea sect to the Jerusalem high priests.

The text begins with a statement: "These are some of our legal rulings regarding God's Torah, which are some of the rulings of the laws that we hold, and all of them regard sacrifices and purity."

This document sets out places where the authors don't agree with what's going on in Jerusalem. One of the manuscripts of this document provides us with a calendar written above the previously quoted passage. The Qumran sectarian texts include a whole variety of calendar texts, including a kind of reformist calendar that demands a calendar that will work on a 364-day scheme in which there are 91-day quarters. In such a calendar there are solar months and solar years, as opposed to the Jewish calendar that is used to this day, which has lunar months made to be equivalent to solar years by adding an extra month approximately every three years.

Because the letter or document that follows the calendar has major differences between the sectarians and the establishment, it is apparent that some scribe tacked the calendar on to point out yet another difference. This calendar also includes extra festivals also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls texts.

This second specifies twenty-two laws, stated as the sect's opinions versus the opinions of their opponents following the solar calendar. When the authors say "we," they are taking the position associated with the Sadducees in other Jewish legal traditions. When they say "you," they refer to the Pharisaic tradition.

After the list of laws, they say the following:

"You know that we have separated from the mainstream of the people, from all their impurities, from mixing in these matters, and from being involved with them. . . . But you know that there cannot be found in our hands dishonesty, falsehood, or evil."

Then they say that the people they are writing to should consult the books of the Bible to know what they are doing. They mention the curses that were visited on Israel during the period of the Divided Monarchy after about 954 BCE or so, when the monarchy was divided into the north and south. They argue that it is the End of Days.

They are basically arguing in the document that the period in which the Israelites will go astray and then repent has already passed and that they are in the period of repentance on the eve of the End of Days. There comes a key issue in the conclusion of the document: that the addressees should recognize that the sect is right and that if they follow their ways they will more or less return to the mainstream, but if not, they will remain in opposition.

The conclusion: "Indeed, we have written to you some of the rulings pertaining to the Torah, which we considered were good for you and your people, for we have seen that you have wisdom and knowledge of the Torah, understand these matters, and seek from Him that He correct your council and distance you from evil thoughts and the council of Belial in order that you shall rejoice in the end when you find some of our words correct, and let it be considered right for you and lead you to do righteousness and good and be to your benefit and for that of Israel."

This is before the sectarians had given up, before they had separated from the Jerusalem establishment, when they believed they could convince their associates to follow their approach.

It is possible that after 152 BCE or so, some Sadducee priests separated from the Temple because Jonathan had followed the Pharisaic ways and installed their legal rulings into the Temple. The sectarian group could have come into being in protest against these decisions.

What Are the Controversies in Jewish Law That Appear in the Text?

These controversies are minor matters of ritual at which what is at stake is the interpretation of the Torah and the way in which these interpretations are put into effect.

One of the problems that existed in ancient Jerusalem was how to treat the purity of vessels. Temple worship required that all vessels be retained in ritual purity. Sectarian groups all observed purity laws in their eating. A problem was what happened when you poured into an impure vessel. Does the impurity go back up the stream from the impure vessel to the pure one?

From MMT: "We say that they (the waters from the originally pure vessel) do not have purity (after being in contact with an impure liquid) and even the liquid streams do not separate between the impure and pure, for the moisture of the liquid streams and the vessel that receives it from them are both considered one identical moisture."

This is in direct disagreement with the view of the Pharisees and in agreement with the view ascribed to the Sadducees.

Often what is seen in these sectarian disagreements is agreement among all the Jews of the period about fundamentals and disagreement about how to put them into effect. The first lesson is to understand that many of the legal views of the Sadducees on Jewish law became the legal views of the

Dead Sea Scrolls sect. The second lesson is that this is the beginning of historical proof that much of this kind of reporting in the later sources is accurate, that is, when the Talmud and Mishnah refer to the laws of earlier Second Temple times.

The scholar E.P. Sanders used the term “common Judaism” to describe Judaism in the Roman period. This is the notion that many of the debates appear to be over minor matters among groups that basically subscribe to the same principles. Even the Jews who constituted the core of the nascent church observed these types of purity laws. The entire list of issues in the MMT will appear trivial to an outsider, but to someone who understands the details of Jewish law, this is exceedingly significant.

The Authors

Who wrote the document? Some scholars thought that the Teacher of Righteousness, who was the leader of the sectarian group according to many texts, wrote the MMT document to explain his disagreements with the Temple establishment. But this seems not to be the case. The document came into existence before the sect coalesced, and it probably was authored by others.

The earliest members of the sectarian group would have been pious Sadducee priests who exited the Jerusalem establishment and formed the sect that eventually ended up at Qumran after the Hasmoneans took up with the Pharisees to follow Pharisaic law. This would explain why throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls there is mention of the sons of Zadok as the leaders of the sect and as those at the core of its decision-making process. There are some scholars who disagree about this and who feel that the “sons of Zadok” were added later to the text.

Some scholars argue that the sectarian documents demonstrate hatred of outsiders, belief in a world to come, belief in predestination, and that if they were Sadducees they couldn't believe those things. No sensible person would argue that the sectarians were Sadducees, only that there is a Sadducean strain to their teachings and that their historical origins may lie in a Sadducee group.

Blind Men Groping on the Road

There is a text, the Damascus Document, that seems to be about the founding of the sect. It claims that after God had handed over the Temple to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, He remembered Israel and caused to grow the root of a plant, namely the Dead Sea sect.

There is a quote in the Damascus Document that says, “They were like blind men groping on the road for twenty years” and “He set up for them a Teacher of Righteousness to direct them in the ways of His heart.” This all means that the sectarian group had come into existence apparently after the struggle in 152 BCE, that it was a confused, leaderless group, and then sometime twenty years later there came the Teacher of Righteousness. He became the sect's leader, and he led the sectarians toward the way that eventually became that of the beliefs specific to the sect, which in many ways parallel those of the Essenes. This seems to also be supported by a variety of texts that speak of the “new covenant.”

The Damascus Document is so called because it refers to the fact that at some point the sectarians went back to live in the "land of Damascus." Many scholars have come to the conclusion that Damascus is a code word for Qumran. One text refers to the people who have "entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus and (members who later left the sect) have turned away and rebelled and turned aside from the well of living waters." In the 1920s, before the Dead Sea Scrolls were found at Qumran, there were scholars who wanted to excavate in the Jewish quarter of Damascus because they thought that this group might have come from there. If Damascus is a code word for Qumran, then the Zadokite Fragments fit perfectly with the MMT document.

There would have been a period at the beginning of inner debate in 152 BCE or shortly thereafter when some disagreed with the Pharisaic way of Jonathan, and broke off to form a proto sect. The proto-sectarians were "groping around for twenty years" and during the period of groping would have continued to follow the Sadducean ways while protesting the Pharisaic processes and procedures that had become significant in the Temple.

Finally, a sectarian leader, the Teacher of Righteousness, emerged and led them to establish themselves at the sectarian settlement at Qumran, which would become the center for the group, and on the other hand he led them toward the specific sectarian beliefs and the specific invective that then became typical of the sectarian group as we know it. This would give a picture of how the sect came into being, explain the large amount of Sadducean tradition in its early teachings, and it would also provide a fixed period for the beginning of the sectarian group after 152 BCE.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What effect did the MMT text have on Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship?
2. What is meant by “common Judaism”?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 5: The Qumran Sect

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, and chapters 6 and 7.

The Character of the Qumran Community

A basic assumption of Dead Sea Scrolls study is that there is an intimate link between the scrolls and buildings at the site of Qumran. The caves are just a few minutes' walk from the site, and the very same types of pottery were found in both places.

These buildings provide evidence for a religious community that practiced ritual purity and communal meals, and it is probable that members of this group were buried at the cemetery between Qumran and the Dead Sea.

Still, there are some scholars who hold other views, claiming the scrolls might be the library of the Jerusalem Temple or of some groups in Jerusalem, or claiming perhaps that Qumran was really a Roman fortress, or that the place was simply a commercial center. It seems more probable, however, that this was a center for a sectarian religious group that had retired to this place to pursue a life of "perfect holiness," as they called it in the texts.

Rule of the Community

There are three types of scrolls in the collection: biblical scrolls, apocryphal works, and sectarian literature. The sectarian literature sets out specific things about the theology of the group, and information about the way the group was structured and its peculiar way of life.

A text called the *Rule of the Community* describes the way of life of this group in terms of entrance (initiation) rites. Similar rites are described by Josephus and Philo for the group they call the Essenes, and also in Talmudic sources for a group linked closely with the Pharisees.

At first, there is an examination regarding an initiate's aptitude before he or she can begin to move through the process of initiation. The initiate then stands before the assembly and there is a process of voting. The person will be either "brought near" or "kept away." He is then evaluated in terms of religious commitment and beliefs. If he passes the test, he is allowed to come into contact with the solid food of the sect, but not the liquids, because liquids are more susceptible to impurity. Only after another year would he get to come into contact with the liquid foods of the sect, participate fully in the communal meals, and mingle his property. This initiation rite is effectively based on the questions of ritual purity.

The Bible outlines ritual purity in great detail. It was supposed to be practiced by the priests in the Temple and those who wished to enter the Temple. Numerous groups had come into existence that practiced purity outside the

Temple. In the New Testament, Jesus and his followers did not support the notion that one should use purity as a separator.

The text in the *Rule of the Community* tells of a four-stage novitiate. On the other hand, the Damascus Document tells of a two-stage novitiate. How is this rectified? The Damascus Document speaks to those members of the group who are scattered all over the land. People would have gone to Qumran to proceed through the last two stages and become full members.

The Qumran site contains a large number of ritual baths that would have been used by Jews who practiced ritual purity outside the Temple in their own everyday lives. The cemetery also contains only the graves of males, so it seems that those who lived at Qumran were primarily males.

The terms used for the liquid and solid foods in the text were very similar to the terms used by the rabbis. The ritual purity here is based on a system that is almost exactly the same as that used by the Talmudic rabbis.

A passage from the *Rule of the Community*:

“He will not be purified by atonement rituals, nor will he become pure in waters of lustration. He will not be sanctified in seas or rivers, nor will he be purified in any waters of ablution. Impure he will remain as long as he despises the divine regulations, so as not to be disciplined by the council of his community.”

Ritual purity is a process of self-improvement and repentance. Only those who've truly repented and want to join this group can become true members of the sect.

The Qumran Sect and the Essenes

There are many parallels between what we learn in the Dead Sea *Rule of the Community* and what Josephus says about the sect of the Essenes. Essenes were required to start off their entrance into that sect with one year of study, and were given a hatchet, loin cloth, and white clothing. Following were years of testing before one was allowed the purer form of holy water. All this seems parallel to what was seen in the sectarian materials.

It should be remembered, though, that it wasn't only the Essenes who had initiation rites. These were also described in the Mishnah and in other Rabbinic texts as regards the group Havurah, which existed within the Pharisaic community in Second Temple times. This tells us that groups with initiation rituals who drew borders between themselves and others were common in the Jewish community.

According to Josephus's descriptions of the Essenes, they seem to have shared all their property in common. Once you became an Essene, you surrendered all your property. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, there was the idea that property was handed over to the sect for communal use. From the point of view of the scroll sect, it's possible that the property might have been turned over and registered, but would have been given back if one left the group. Therefore, one would be surrendering the use, but not the ownership. But others maintain that it really was ownership being surrendered.

According to sectarian regulations, you needed the approval of an examiner to do business. It seems that all the transactions were considered as if they were made with the approval of the sect, because the property had been handed over. Also, you had to pay an 8 percent tax to sustain the poor and needy.

The word “Essene” could include a wide variety of groups that had a lot in common. If you understand it that way, it’s possible that our group could be considered Essene. But it’s hard to find complete identity between the Essenes described by Philo and Josephus and the sectarians, because there are a lot of small differences.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, there was a whole sect of penal codes and punishments. A person who transgressed could face permanent expulsion, temporary expulsion, separation from the solid food for one year, reduction of one’s food ration by a quarter for two years, or separation from the pure liquids for two years. In these terms, what one sees is that the admissions process was being reversed.

This group had a number of interesting laws regarding outsiders. For example, when a person entered the group, he was not allowed to bring in any work or money that came from the outside, and he couldn’t eat food belonging to someone on the outside, nor drink something from an outsider or make trade with something other than cash with an outsider. Social and economic relations were all conducted in a special, separate way.

Essentially, there was a community with a special purity, communal property, and with others barred from participation. In other words, this community constituted a separate group designed to preserve and foster the idea of perfect ritual holiness.

Leadership of the Sect

The sect could very well have been formed by a group of Zadokite priests. These leaders would have not only formed the sect but given it its initial traditions as far as Jewish law was concerned. On the other hand, over time, other members of the sect became more and more important, and these leaders included a very special character, the Teacher of Righteousness.

Despite theories that have been put forth, it’s impossible that the Teacher of Righteousness could be Jesus or John the Baptist, and the sectarian texts were, in fact authored before the births of Jesus or John the Baptist.

This Teacher of Righteousness seems to have come into leadership some short time after the founding of the sect around 152 BCE. This seems to be the teacher who taught the sectarians the particular idea of separation and led them toward the sectarian mentality. It must have been he who taught them the idea that the world was divided strictly into good and evil. He seems to have been succeeded by other leaders, and one of them was known as the Examiner, and that leader was charged with keeping the sectarian records.

One of the main things about the sectarian leadership is that there were both priestly leaders and lay leaders. It seems that these leaders are part of an overall tendency toward the rise of lay leadership in the ancient Jewish community. After all, it was not very long until the Jewish community stopped being run by priests and started being run by rabbis, who are lay teachers of the law.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What was the basic nature of the organization of the sect and how did it flow from their fundamental beliefs?
2. What are the most significant texts for understanding the sectarian way of life and what do they teach us?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

Lecture 6: Women and the Dead Sea Scrolls Sect

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapters 8 and 9.

The Evidence of the Ancient Greek Authors

From the first day the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, the issue of women was being discussed. The early scholars who worked with the scrolls came to the conclusion that the Dead Sea sectarians were a celibate group assumed to be identical with the Essenes by a variety of Greek sources, including Philo and Josephus.

Pliny the Elder, who lived between 23 and 79 CE, wrote a description of the nature of Judean society in which he describes the Essenes as celibate and as living above Masada. This information has frequently been used to support the claim that the sect of Qumran is the Essenes and that the group was celibate.

One problem is that Pliny did not visit the Dead Sea area, so he didn't realize that Qumran and the whole Dead Sea area were destroyed in 68. He therefore described people living at what we think is Qumran when it was in fact already destroyed. But Pliny had still gotten information from someone who had been there, and that someone thought the people there were the Essenes and that they were celibate.

Pliny explained why he thought the Essenes were celibate:

"It has no women and has renounced all sexual desire."

Philo wrote in a similar way:

"They abstain from marriage because they plainly perceive it to be the only or the primary danger to the maintenance of communal life as well as because they especially practice continence, for no Essene take wife because a wife is a selfish creature addicted to jealousy and skillful at beguiling the morals of her husband and seducing him by her continued deceptions."

This point of view expressed about the Essenes by Pliny and Philo, if correct, would mean that that group was celibate because they had a negative view about the institution of marriage and also of women. But then how could they set aside the Bible's commandment to be fruitful and multiply, and how was it possible to practice abstinence from childbearing if you were a pious Jew?

The complex description from Josephus may be more important for this discussion:

"They avoid pleasures as a vice and regard continence and the control of the desires as a special virtue. They disdain marriage. They do not actually on principle reject wedlock and that propagation therein of humanity, but

they want to protect themselves from promiscuous women, since they are convinced that none of them preserves her fidelity to one man.”

All of this indicates that the Essenes were a celibate group, but was this the case with the sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls? Josephus complicates matters by writing of another order of Essenes (and remember that “Essenes” could be a term for a group of sects):

“They believe that those who refuse to marry negate the purpose of life, the propagation of humanity, and furthermore if everyone were to adopt the same approach, the entire human race would quickly become extinct. . . . But they subject their wives to three years’ probation and marry them only after they have by three periods of ritual purification demonstrated proof of fertility. They do not have sexual relations with them during pregnancy, thus showing that their purpose in marriage is not pleasure, but the assurance of posterity.”

Apparently, there was then a group of Essenes who minimized sexual relations, did not marry women who could not be shown by three periods to be fertile, and that never had sex with women who could not have children. It is very possible that the Qumran sect could either have belonged to the group of celibate Essenes or to the group of marrying Essenes.

The Question of Celibacy in the Texts

When one looks at the society described in the Zadokite Fragments, or Damascus Document, the norm is family and children. It seems that the text is describing the group that is scattered about the land of Israel, and this document mentions only the two stages of initiation that would be practiced outside of Qumran.

The text, for example, includes a spirited attack on polygamy. According to the Hebrew scriptures, polygamy was permitted, though it was later forbidden in the New Testament and in the Jewish tradition. The attack on polygamy here, however, seems to assume that marriage is the norm. In fact, the text claims that it is fornication to have “two wives in your lifetime.” This apparently indicates that if a woman’s husband died, she could remarry, but if a couple got divorced, neither party could get remarried (they would only be able to live in a state of separation).

The text makes clear that polygamy is forbidden, but within the marital relationship, monogamy is permitted. There are laws of menstrual purity in which sexual relations cannot occur when a woman is having her period. And the text also goes on to argue strongly against someone marrying his niece. The implication is clear: People are allowed to marry and have children.

The *Rule of Congregation*, a text regarding the End of Days, sets out the following:

“At twenty years of age he shall pass among them that are numbered to enter into full status along with his family, to join the holy congregation. He shall not approach a woman to have sexual relations with her until he reaches the age of twenty, at which time he knows good and evil.” Indeed, this seems to imply that a person can bring a family into alliance with the sectarian group.

A Division of Opinion

It is arguable that the sectarians were not celibate, that if they were the Essenes, they were the marrying Essenes. The only really good argument against this is that the *Rule of the Community* lists all kinds of details about sectarian life, but women are never mentioned.

Despite the evidence that the Essene sect, according to Greek authors, was a celibate sect, there is other evidence that they were in fact a marrying group. Still, many scholars do not agree: Many will say that the Dead Sea sect was a celibate group, at least at the Qumran center.

There is a Dead Sea Scrolls document that is often referred to as a marriage ritual. This text has some phrases like “and his wife,” “to make seed,” “daughter of truth,” “sons and daughters,” “seed of blessing,” “old men and old women,” “young men and virgins,” “boys and girls,” and “fruit of the womb.” The original editor called the document a “marriage ritual.” Its references of men and women together and of reproduction would seem to support the idea that the sect was not celibate.

Another scroll, the Temple Scroll, talks extensively about women. This document basically sets out the law of the Torah from the end of Exodus through the middle of Deuteronomy, calling for the building of a gigantic temple and also requiring a kind of constitutional revision of the Hasmonean Dynasty. In any case, the text mentions women several times. There are marriage laws and the idea that women should be separated from the community during menstruation, but the rest of what is in the scroll is a series of quotations from the Hebrew Bible, specifically from the Five Books of Moses, regarding women, and these were not the views of the sectarians or people in the Second Temple period regarding women; this was simply copying and reflection of laws in the Hebrew Bible. This document had a tremendous amount of concern for discussing laws pertaining to women and making clear the legal character of women in the context of what it perceived to be the laws of the Torah.

Archaeology: The Qumran Cemetery and Small Finds

The Qumran cemetery has approximately twelve hundred graves in the main area between the settlement and the Dead Sea. There was also a small side cemetery that included the graves of women and children. One argument is that if the sectarians were not celibate, one would expect a large number of women in the cemetery.

This doesn't have to mean that the sect was celibate, however, because people could have come to the Qumran sect to proceed through the later stages of initiation into the sect, and it could be argued that most of these graves were of men who coincidentally died while at the site to complete their initiation.

The discovery of small finds was also made at Qumran: makeup kits, beads, so-called spindle whorls. It seems that Qumran demonstrated a small number of these objects that would have belonged to women. There are much greater numbers of such objects at other sites in the Dead Sea area, such as at Masada, but nonetheless, it can be concluded that there were apparently women at Qumran.

Some claim that a document called the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* is an attack on women, but this passage could be seen as simply showing the condemnation of the sectarians for the type of woman that they regarded as leading men astray. Essentially, the document assumes the goodness of the marital relationship and condemns women who practice wanton relationships and who are sinners and who lead men astray.

Scholars will likely continue to argue for a very long time about whether the sectarians were celibate and whether women were part of the sect.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What are the arguments for and against the celibacy of the Qumran sect?
2. What evidence has been mustered to argue for the presence of women at Qumran?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

Schuller, Eileen. "Women in the Dead Sea Scrolls." *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*. By James C. VanderKam and Peter Flint. Leiden, NE: Brill, 1999.

Lecture 7: Theology and Beliefs of the Dead Sea Sect

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapter 9.

Predestination

At the very beginning of the Bible is the idea that there is a God who is the creator. For the sectarians, God is a complete unity. There is one God, and while there may be competing forces in the universe, these are forces that God let loose. The one God is all-powerful, but there are all kinds of beings under him that could be seen as almost divine: angels and other types of beings, including Belial, the leader of the forces of evil.

The sectarians believed in fundamental predestination. The following passage is taken from the Zadokite documents:

"And before they were established He knew their deeds. He knew the years of their existence and the set time and exact epochs of all that have come into being and knows what will happen to all those that will come into being for all the years of eternity. God has determined everything in advance and knows what all people will ever do."

The sectarian God is also all-controlling, very different from the concept of God found in Pharisaic Judaism and almost all forms of early Christianity. The assumption that God has complete foreknowledge is based on the idea that time doesn't apply to Him. Here the idea is that all decisions in a person's life are made by God.

The Sektarian Calendar

The sectarian calendar was meant to be a sign of the continuity of God's creation and of its inexorability. Whereas the regular Jewish calendar had lunar months, and every three years the calendar was made equivalent to solar years by adding an extra month, the calendar of the Qumran sectarians was structured on a solar calendar. The notion was that it should be inexorable and never change (it should be noted that the sectarians' calendar was based on a 364-day year and would not, in fact, have worked).

Good and Evil

The Mystery texts lay out the whole sense of how the world works, which as part of God's mystery can never be truly understood. God is eventually going to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. The sectarians, at the End of Days, will be victorious and all the attributes of God, according to their teachings, will be made clear and obvious. It follows that there is a kind of dualism here, because God is absolute good, and if that's the fact, there has to be some explanation for evil.

According to this concept, God is the ultimate author of both what's good and what's evil. The sectarians took this concept and transformed it into a sense that there is a competition in this world between good and evil, that God may control both, but evil has its own captain or leader and therefore competes with good. The *Rule of the Community* explains this dualism as follows:

"He created mankind for dominion of the earth and He sent over them two spirits so that he, man, could follow them until the time of His visitation. These are the spirits of truth and iniquity, for from the dwelling place of light are the origins of truth and from the source of dark are the origins of iniquity. In the hand of the Prince of Light is the dominion of all the sons of righteousness. They walk in the ways of light but in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is the entire dominion over the sons of iniquity and they walk in the ways of darkness."

The forces of good and the forces of evil do not simply operate with their lots on Earth; they have dominions in Heaven that also struggle with one another. One's life is determined by the lot he is placed in: the lot of the sons of light or the lot of the sons of evil. This concept is connected with the idea of Eastern dualism, but at the same time, the Qumran sect does not believe in absolute dualism in which there is an evil force independent of God. Rather, there is a tempering of it, because the Bible has said that God is all-powerful and He can't really be competed with.

Many will ask how this is different than the good inclinations and bad inclinations of the Rabbis, but there is a major difference: In the Rabbinic system, there are essentially inner urges and desires. For the sectarians, however, these are external powers and they compete for dominion.

People are predestined not simply as a world, but as individuals, and this is made very clear by the *Rule of the Community*. But do the sectarians really believe that a person is all good or all evil, and that everything has been decided in advance?

There are a few texts that seem to indicate the possibility that people have measures, or amounts, of good and evil in their personality. But when one reads the main texts that describe these ideas, one comes away with the impression that the sectarians' is an absolute notion of predestination.

Lowly Humanity

One of the main themes that emerges when reading the scrolls, especially the *Thanksgiving Hymns*, is the notion of a personal search for God. In fact, sectarian members hoped to get close to God by somehow experiencing His holiness. This is accomplished in the sectarian view in accord with the ideas of dualism by some kind of self-deprecation, by seeing oneself as a lowly human being. According to sectarian ideas, the human being is a lowly creature made out of clay, or dust, that has been made by mixing that clay or dust with water.

This lowliness is expressed over and over in the *Thanksgiving Hymns*. The author seems to say repeatedly that human beings are essentially sinful. And because human beings are sinful, they are divided into these two lots, and most will end up on the side of evil.

Is Everything Fated?

The sectarian view raises the question of how a person can be predestined to be on the side of evil and then punished by God for being so predestined. This is a difficult notion for those who believe that people are punished or rewarded for their individual deeds.

How can one achieve forgiveness? The sectarians believed this was accomplished through God's grace. This fits in with the idea of predestination by understanding that there are people predestined to repent and predestined to receive God's grace.

The sectarians assumed that there would come a day when there was a great slaughter and all the evildoers would be destroyed and the good people (the elect) protected. The sectarians would survive into the next era. The good would be justly rewarded, and the evildoers would be punished.

On the issue of predestination and dualism, Josephus wrote the following:

"Regarding the Pharisees, they say that certain events are the work of fate, but not all. Regarding other events, it depends upon us as to whether they will take place or not. The view of the Essenes states that Fate is the mistress of all things, that nothing happens unless it is in accordance with her decision, but the Sadducees do away with Fate, believing that there is no such thing, and that human actions are not determined in accordance with her decision but that all things are within our power so that we ourselves are responsible for our well-being, while we suffer misfortune as a result of our own folly."

The passage relates that the Pharisees believe that God can interfere in some events, but basically human beings have free will. The Essene view is that God has predetermined everything. The Sadducees basically believe that God controls nothing and they do not believe in the immortality of the soul.

The Dead Sea sectarians seemed to believe in a world to come and reward and punishment, and they also seemed to believe in the immortality of the soul. This would put them in conflict with Sadducee beliefs, so people will say that they cannot be Sadducees. But it is possible that a group of Sadducees left the Temple structure and eventually constituted this separate sect. From the time of its formation this sectarian sect underwent a total transition into a group that was highly radicalized and highly sectarian.

The earliest founders of the sect could have been Sadducees who may not have believed in life after death or reward and punishment, but as the sectarian community developed, the leader of the sect, probably the Teacher of Righteousness, taught these new ideas and they were adopted by the group.

Predestination and the Revealed and Hidden Law

In terms of the Dead Sea Scrolls' understanding of the laws of the Torah, the laws divide into two categories: the hidden and the revealed. The revealed laws are known to anyone who reads the Five Books of Moses. The hidden laws are known only to those who study in the sectarian group and learn its laws, and yet everybody is punished, according to the sect, for following incorrect laws that they had no way to know.

The sectarians believe that one is responsible for his or her behavior even if it's impossible to know right or wrong or control one's actions. This particular approach could be called the Achilles heel of predestination. Predestination solves the problem of why there is evil in the world, and it solves the problem of why certain people go down the wrong path, but it also opens up the much worse question of why a person should do good if it's not within his or her power to be a good person.

Elements of these ideas are found in the Rabbinic tradition and in the New Testament, which is easily understood in light of the fact that these ideas were floating around and being debated by Jews in the second and first centuries BCE.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. How do the sectarian concepts of dualism and predestination relate to one another?
2. How does the theology of the Qumran sect compare with what we know of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes? To which group are they most similar and why?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 8: Biblical Interpretation

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapters 13 and 14.

Translation and Commentary

Throughout the history of Judaism, biblical interpretation has been a central theme. It runs through the biblical period itself, because even in the Hebrew Scriptures, one can see interpretations of earlier scriptural works.

In the post-Hebrew Bible period (as soon as the fourth century BCE), there is the phenomenon of the “rewritten Bible,” in which texts of the Old Testament begin to be interpreted, and these interpretations form the basis for developments in Judaism that go on throughout its history.

With the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are some of the earliest documents that tell of this process of biblical interpretation (also known as “exegesis”).

Cave 7 at Qumran contained a number of Greek manuscripts. Some scholars incorrectly identified Greek material from this cave as the Gospel of Mark, but here instead are fragments of the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Bible). Two Targum texts (Aramaic translations of the Bible) show the earliest evidence of what would be the Targumic tradition. There are also large parts of the Book of Job, which gives us a large amount of information about how the Book of Job was understood in the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls (that is, the second century BCE).

Plain-Sense Commentary

Similar to translation is another kind of commentary called plain-sense commentary, an attempt to explain what the Bible really says. There is a Dead Sea Scrolls document called the Genesis Commentary that addresses a fundamental problem in the Book of Genesis: After Noah awakens from his drunkenness, he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham. According to the Bible, the sons, including Ham, had seen the nakedness of Noah, so it would be understandable to curse Ham rather than Canaan.

The commentary says the following:

“He, Noah, did not curse Ham, but rather his son, for God had blessed the sons of Noah.” So apparently, because God had blessed the sons of Noah, Noah could not curse them and could only instead curse the grandson, Canaan.

There is another question in the Bible about a complex verse, Genesis 49:4. There among the blessings that Jacob gives to his sons is this difficult passage about Reuben:

“For when you mounted your father’s bed, you brought disgrace—my couch he mounted!”

Some biblical commentaries seek to interpret away Reuben's sin, but the Dead Sea Scrolls' interpretation is that Jacob reproved Reuben because he had had sexual relations with Jacob's concubine. The plain-sense commentaries are examples of the Dead Sea Scrolls group trying to find out the same kinds of things about the Bible that people today want to know.

The Rewritten Bible

In Genesis 12, Abram tells Sarai to claim that she is his sister rather than his wife. The biblical verse poses the question, Why did Abram tell Sarai to lie? The Dead Sea Scrolls text tells us that if it were known that Sarai was his wife when they entered Egypt to escape the famine in the land of Canaan, the Egyptian king would kill Abram and take his wife. The Genesis Apocryphon tells us that God appeared to Abram in a dream and instructed him to say that Sarai was his sister, which would save Abram's life. This is a kind of fanciful interpretation to answer a question that the Bible does not answer.

Throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls text, we find such interpretations in which the biblical text in its Aramaic translation is closely woven together with these interpretations. In these passages, there is no distinction between that which is biblical and that which is not.

The whole concept of the rewritten Bible was held in a very negative light by the later Talmudic Rabbis. For them, one had to separate the biblical word of God from the interpretations that emerged from the divine-human partnership that created the traditions of ancient Israel.

Harmonizing Interpretation

Another type of interpretation that runs throughout Qumran literature is what is called "harmonization" or "harmonizing interpretation." Both texts composed before the Qumran sect and texts composed during the time of the sect contain examples of harmonization.

The Bible is rich in accounts, ideas, statements, and laws. Harmonization seeks to bring together passages on the same topic and make them become one. The Temple Scroll gives laws of sacrifice, among which are "You shall not sacrifice to me an ox or sheep in which there is any serious defect, for they are an abomination to me." In Deuteronomy 17, the text speaks of an animal "which has a defect, anything serious." But in Deuteronomy 15, there is another term, "any serious blemish." In our text, the two biblical phrases that are about the same thing are added together to create one phrase: "serious defect." This happens not just in interpretation, but in the scribal passing down of text.

Harmonization can also refer to entire passages and bodies of content. The Temple Scroll lists the festivals of the people of Israel according to the biblical accounts found in Numbers and Leviticus. But there are festivals in the Dead Sea Scrolls that don't exist in the Hebrew scriptural account.

One of these is the Spring New Year. Harmonization occurred when scribes simply copied what was said for the Fall New Year in the Scripture and used it for the Spring New Year.

Midrash and Peshet

Another type of interpretation is called Halakhic Midrash. The term “Halakhah” comes from the Hebrew word “Halakh,” meaning “to go,” or perhaps from Aramaic “Halakh,” meaning “a tax” in Aramaic. The term refers to a way of life and the entire content of Jewish Law. The term is a Talmudic term, and some don’t like to use it for the Dead Sea Scrolls, so “Halakhah” is generally used to refer to Hebrew law.

Midrash is a type of biblical interpretation that involves the comparison of verses. Often, these interpretations are based on complex analysis of biblical verses and they can concern all kinds of subjects.

Another mode of interpretation is even further separated from the literal meaning of the texts: Peshet, referring to an interpretation which is “contemporizing.” It is understood that the text speaks not about the ancient historical context of the author, but rather about the reader’s time, in this case, the time of the Qumran sectarians.

Peshet involves the arrangement of biblical texts followed by explicit statements of interpretation. Texts are generally arranged in biblical order in a fashion of verse, comment, verse, comment. Essentially, these interpretations originate with the Teacher of Righteousness. The text relates that the Teacher interpreted the word of the prophets and that he did so under divine inspiration. Further, only these divinely interpreted prophecies constitute the real meaning of the words of the ancient prophets. There is an assumption here, therefore, that prophecy is a two-part process.

This kind of contemporizing, in which an ancient text is not about its own time but about a later time, has an interesting parallel in the New Testament. A fundamental assumption of the Gospels is that the life of Jesus is in fulfillment of Hebrew Scripture. Of course, this is one of the main issues of Jewish-Christian debate.

Because they sought to update the ancient prophecies, the Peshet texts ended up providing us with an enormous treasure of information about the sect itself. There is the story of a confrontation that took place between the Teacher of Righteousness and a so-called “wicked priest.” The same text tells of a group who stood by and did not support the Teacher. This type of information tells something of the difficulties that brought the sect into existence and that led to its separation from the mainstream.

Much of this kind of interpreted material had a fundamental effect on later Judaism and Christianity. Translations were part of Jewish literature and were used by the New Testament writers to create their texts. Numerous types of biblical interpretations are found in early Judaism, and several of these were adopted by early Christianity.

Interpretations also serve as the manner in which the Hebrew Bible stays eternally relevant in every single generation. The earliest examples of these interpretations are found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and it is here that basic patterns can be found that will affect the entire later history of Judaism and Christianity.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. How do the biblical interpretive methods of the Dead Sea sectarians compare to those of other early Jewish groups and nascent Christianity?
2. What was the role of biblical interpretation in the Qumran sect?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 9: The Hebrew Bible in Second Temple Times

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapter 10.

Handing Down the Biblical Text

Underlying the whole phenomenon of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the Hebrew Bible. The books of the Hebrew Bible were such a profound product of the culture of ancient Israel that they shaped the later development of all forms of Judaism and Christianity. Indeed, one can even approach the development of Judaism and Christianity as if it is a question of how one should interpret the Hebrew Scriptures and how one can live a life that tries to actualize the teachings of the Hebrew Bible.

For the Qumran sectarians, the Hebrew Bible was passed down in all kinds of manuscripts that represented the nature of the Bible as it existed in Second Temple times. People often ask whether the Dead Sea Scrolls answer such questions as whether the Torah had one author or whether Isaiah was one or two (or even more) prophets. The scrolls do not answer these questions. In fact, the scrolls do not say anything about what happened in the period of the Hebrew Scriptures (the First Temple period). The scrolls, rather, comment on the text as it came down to them.

When one examines the biblical texts found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, one is basically reading the Bible of today. The very small biblical variances found in the Dead Sea Scrolls attest to the extreme care with which the Hebrew Bible was handed down.

The State of the Bible at Qumran

The nature of the manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls is often oversimplified in debates over the continuity of biblical tradition and the authority of the Bible. One might read that the Dead Sea Scrolls prove that every single letter of the Bible has never changed and that there are no variations in any of the manuscripts. This, of course, is false. One might also read that the Dead Sea Scrolls prove that the Bible was fluid, developing, that the biblical writing had not been solidified, and that no one knew what books were in the Bible. This too is false. The situation is much more complex.

First, the Book of Esther was not found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. One opinion is that the Book of Esther, which describes the redemption of the Jews from an anti-Semitic attack in the Persian Empire, was simply not there because of coincidence. Perhaps the fragments were too small and simply didn't survive. The other opinion is that the members of the Qumran group rejected the holiday called Purim, held in March, which celebrated this victory. In fact, this holiday was not mentioned in any of the calendar texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls. So some simply said that the Book of Esther was left out

because the sectarians didn't accept it as biblical. All the rest of the books, however, were clearly part of their Bible and had authority.

The Canon of the Bible

There might be two other books that were admitted into the canon of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the so-called Aramaic Levi document, parallel to the Testament of Levi, which purports to be a kind of speech by Levi, the ancestor of the Priests and Levites. The other book is Jubilees, a kind of retelling of the story of Genesis that structures itself on the biblical Jubilees and tries to make the point that all the laws were observed by the Patriarchs even before they were given.

A canon that contains the three parts of the Hebrew Bible (Torah, Prophets, and Writings) was already in existence during the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Rule of the Community speaks of "that which has been revealed to Moses" as well as the Prophets, and that combination is known to have existed.

But perhaps most importantly, there is the MMT text, which has the following passage. The sectarians write to the addressee, "We have written to you in order that you should understand the Book of Moses and the words of the Prophets and David (Psalms) and the Chronicles of each generation (later historical books of the Bible)." So it seems that this idea of a three-part Bible was already entrenched in Second Temple times.

The concept of the division of the Hebrew Bible into three parts is based on decreasing strength of revelation (the Torah is God's word spoken through Moses; the Prophets are God's revelations to his prophets; and then with the Writings, the Holy Spirit was a kind of mediator in which God's spirit rested on those who wrote those books). This collection was not formally sealed for Talmudic Jews until later in the first century after the destruction of the Temple, but there's no question that there was a recognized canon before.

Masoretic, Proto-Samaritan, and Proto-Septuagint

There are varying forms of the biblical text found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Most textbooks say about the Dead Sea Scrolls that there were three types of biblical texts found at Qumran: the proto-Masoretic, proto-Samaritan, and Septuagint.

The Masoretic text is the name of the received text. The ones at Qumran were called "proto" because the later Bibles had vowels and cantillation notes, whereas the earlier one preserved only the consonantal text.

The Samaritans were a group that existed in small numbers in the land of Israel, and they were descendants of the original northern Israelites. Their descendants represented a distinct group that seems to have accepted only the Five Books of Moses, because they apparently came into existence before there really was a corpus of Prophets, and this group had a Bible text with many variations, some of which were intentionally introduced. However, if you take away the intentionally introduced variations you get the proto-Samaritan text found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The third kind, proto-Septuagint, represents a Hebrew text similar to the one translated by the translators of the Greek Bible (Septuagint).

Many of the texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls look like Masoretic texts and this may be the largest portion. A few look like early versions of the Samaritan, and only five manuscripts look as though they were early versions of Hebrew texts from which the Greek had been translated.

But there is another type of text: “vulgar” text, a text that’s linguistically updated to speak in a Hebrew dialect similar to that which the Dead Sea sectarians used and which may even be peculiar to them. Then there is mixed text, text with all kinds of micro-variations that when examined turn out to overlap in various ways with other texts, almost distributed in a random manner. Mixed texts are a large element and include most of the vulgar texts.

Was the Bible Finished?

Does this mean that the Bible was not finished? It seems to be the case that the Bible was transmitted from earlier antiquity in a variety of manuscripts and that issues of spelling and in some cases more serious textual variance had not yet been resolved. Later, the Talmudic Rabbis would decide that the authoritative texts were those of the proto-Masoretic character from which we get Masoretic, handed-down, received, standard Hebrew Bible text.

Only proto-Masoretic materials can be found at Masada. In materials from the Bar Kathba period (132 to 135 CE) there are only proto-Masoretic materials, very close to our Bible, and we even have Greek Bibles that have been revised to look like the Hebrew Masoretic Bible, because apparently Jews were using them to follow the Torah readings in the synagogue. By the time we get to the Bar Kokhba materials, the standardization is almost complete.

So the scrolls materials testify to a Bible that is more or less as it is today, that has micro-variations but is in the process of being standardized. This explains the discussion in the Talmud of the process of standardization and some of the use of variant texts to determine interpretations and laws. It also explains some of the variations with Hebrew Bible text known in the New Testament.

Intentionally Adapted Bible

In the original seven scrolls, there was a complete Isaiah manuscript, which was written in the Qumran type of writing, and right next to it, another manuscript, Isaiah B, was found, which gives a more or less proto-Masoretic text almost exactly the same as the one in our Hebrew Bible. Yet in the case of Samuel, there are two recensions of Samuel in the scrolls, one of which actually has an added passage in the opinion of some scholars. In the case of the Book of Jeremiah, there are two manuscripts for Jeremiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which represent a shorter version of the book similar to the Greek Bibles. And then there are other versions virtually identical to the Masoretic Jeremiah.

There is an ongoing debate because there are some Dead Sea Scrolls Psalms manuscripts that are virtually the same as our Psalms, and we have other Psalms manuscripts with additional material, and some of this additional material is material of an apocryphal nature. Sometimes it is difficult to really know whether a text is Bible or intentionally adapted Bible.

Apocryphal texts represent a group of books from the Greco-Roman period that are preserved in Septuagint Bibles and in Latin and Greek Bibles by the Catholic Church. These are Jewish books from the second and third centuries BCE. This Apocrypha is a very specific corpus. A few of the books in the Apocrypha are found in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the original language.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masada texts preserve parts of the Book of Ben Sira, known as the Ecclesiasticus (not to be confused with Ecclesiastes). This is the work of a scribe in Jerusalem circa 180 BCE. No original Hebrew of Maccabees has been found, and this is because the sectarians really disagreed with the Hasmoneans, the descendants of the Maccabees. Besides the Bible itself, Apocryphal books circulated at Qumran, and some are exactly the same ones found in the corpus of Apocrypha in the Greek (Catholic) Bible.

There is a whole series of books, pseudepigrapha, that technically are books that purport to be written by ancient authors. Enoch is an example of pseudepigrapha. Some of these books have been preserved in the scrolls. The Genesis Apocryphon adds details to Genesis but tells it all as one continuous story (rewritten Bible).

Another genre of pseudepigrapha texts that appears at Qumran is that of Testaments, the stories of what great biblical figures revealed on their deathbeds. Here we have the Aramaic Levi document. These texts were preserved and passed on with the Bible. Were they considered biblical by the sectarians? There may be room in the canon at Qumran for some of these books. There is also the phenomenon of the rewritten Bible, in which biblical texts get rewritten secondarily. These rewritten texts are kind of updatings and expansions of the Bible to bring the Bible into the world of those who are writing the text.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. How do the scrolls illustrate for us the character of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures in the second and first centuries BCE?
2. How does this information help us to understand the role of the Bible in Judaism and Christianity?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 10: The Messiah and the End of Days

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapters 19 and 20.

Messianic Overtones

Some of the most important themes in the Dead Sea Scrolls are those of the Messiah, the Messianic Era, and the End of Days. The Dead Sea Scrolls constitute the first discussions of this concept of messianism after the Hebrew Scriptures, and hence provide important background information for understanding the rise of Christianity and also the Jewish Revolts against Rome in 66 to 73 CE and 132 to 135 CE, both of which had messianic overtones. In many ways, the messianic idea has become exceedingly important in Judaism and Christianity, both in terms of the notion that there is a kind of progression to the world and as a matter of identity within these religious traditions.

The origins of these concepts lie in the Hebrew Bible. Some maintain that there is no Messiah in the Hebrew Bible, that this is a post-biblical notion. But evidence for all the elements of the core of the messianic idea are in the Hebrew Scriptures, although they have not been integrated into one concept. It is in the Dead Sea Scrolls that these ideas are first integrated.

Elements of the Messianic Tradition

According to the Hebrew Bible, God chose, as seen in Samuel, the House of David to be rulers over Israel. The kingdom split after the death of Solomon, but the idea that there would be restored a Davidic monarchy is found in Isaiah.

The notion of the restoration of the Kingdom of David is fundamental to the concept of messianism. Another idea that is part of the messianic idea in general is the notion of the Day of the Lord, an idea found in some Prophets, especially Ezekiel, that there is going to be a day when there will be a complete destruction of the wicked.

Another element of the messianic tradition is found in Daniel, where there is a progression of kingdoms. The idea is that there will be a progression of foreign rule until Israel rules itself again.

So there is the idea of restoring the Kingdom of Israel, but there is no king yet, no messiah. There are none of the specifics here of the notion of what is called the messianic era.

Messiah or Messiahs?

One could trace a whole series of texts in the Second Temple period that begin to move toward the concept of messianism. Among these texts are different kinds of approaches.

There are some texts where there is an idea of the End of Days without a messianic figure. God would bring the new era or new perfection to His people. The texts don't explicitly say how this would come about, but there's usually some kind of violent conflagration.

In some texts there is one messiah, the restored Davidic king, and there are a few texts in which there are two messiahs, a messiah of Aaron and a lay messiah, the messiah of Israel, who is a divinely appointed figure to manage temporal affairs while the priestly messiah manages religious affairs.

These three approaches coexisted. There are two basic trends that have been observed in Jewish messianism: the utopian (or catastrophic) and the naturalistic type of messianism. The naturalistic type is the notion that over time the world can improve and people can by their own efforts live in a world in which things are much better than the current state. This is often called restorative.

The catastrophic idea is the idea that picks up on the notion of the Day of the Lord. Here is a concept that there can be an era that never was, and this is a period of perfection, but there must first be the violent overthrow of all evil.

The War Scroll

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the very well-known scroll of the War of the Sons of Light versus the Sons of Darkness follows the idea of Utopian messianism. After all, for the sectarians, there will come a day when only they will survive in the End of Days and everyone else will be killed.

The Qumran sect can be called apocalyptic because it expected the Messiah to come immediately. Yet at the same time they expected the cataclysm to be fought out according to the rules of this War Scroll.

Generally, the sectarians held the two-messiah concept, believing in the messiah of Aaron and the messiah of Israel. This is generally true, but not exclusively. In the Dead Sea text, we find numerous texts that reflect also a one-messiah concept, a messiah of David.

There were some who thought that a Teacher of Righteousness-type figure would appear in the End of Days. This idea of a messianic interpreter of the law presumes that someone will come to work alongside the messiah or messiahs and help to explain the teaching of God's Torah for the End of Days.

There are also some passages that describe a messianic prophet. Like the messianic-interpreter-of-the-law idea, this is close to the later idea of Elijah.

The Messianic Banquet

The Rule of the Congregation describes a messianic-period council similar to the council of the community in the present era. This new council would come into existence when the messiah comes. Its role would be to decide when to declare messianic war against the evil-doers. Following the messianic war, this group would be transformed into those who would take part in the great messianic banquet that will celebrate the onset of the End of Days. The banquet is also known from a variety of other Second Temple texts.

According to these documents, there is a whole set of individuals who cannot participate in the messianic council because they are disqualified by some blemish, or by being too old or too young, and there is an idea that the messianic council and the messianic banquet would represent the perfect holiness, and that this perfect holiness would be necessary to start the messianic battle. After the battle, this group will represent the nature of the society of the sect, which will be essentially the only Jewish society left in the End of Days.

The Leader at the End of Days

Most think of a messiah as a redeemer or a savior. The redeemer will bring about the End of Days and then rule over the people in that era. The word “messiah” comes from the Hebrew word that means “to anoint.” In the Hebrew Bible, the word refers to one who is anointed to be king or priest. This might be a perfect term for the sectarians, because if the messiah is the Davidic king, then he himself is a continuator of those who were anointed in the Hebrew tradition.

For the first time, in the Qumran documents, the messiah emerges very specifically as the leader for the End of Days. That concept is not expressed directly in the Hebrew Scriptures. This is another example of why these scrolls are so significant for our understanding of messianism. This important force that would influence Judaism and Christianity first comes together in the scrolls.

Much of the messianic material in the scrolls is based on biblical references: the Rule of Benedictions speaks about a prince of the congregation who seems to be identical with the messiah of Israel who will arrive in the End of Days. All the terms for the messiah found in biblical passages are loaded upon each other in the Dead Sea text. In the War Scroll, on some of the weapons are banners that read “your anointed ones, the seers of things ordained.” The notion here is that prophesy leads to messianism and that messianism is the key to the battle at the End of Days.

The Rule of the Congregation outlines what the assembly will decide at the onset of the messianic battle. Among those things listed for the Council of the Community is specifically an invocation of war. Apparently, some kind of decision by this council was necessary. Once this council has declared war, then the text of the War Scroll describes the specific stages in the war, and this war is described as a ritualized war.

Before the initial Roman conquest of Judea in 63 CE, the sectarians were sure there would be the great war that would usher in the messianic redemption. The passage speaks of stages of the war according to time stages over a forty-year period, all conducted according to a very specific schedule. The text also refers to the need for ritual purity in the camp.

The War Scroll Poems

The author of the War Scroll decided to place preexisting poems in his text. They are beautiful poems, and they suggest the Isaianic prophecy, that all will survive. It is amazing that this idea is found in the midst of the battle plan in which all the rest of humanity is to die. So the competition between these

ideas never ended among the sectarians, the competition between restoration and improvement of the world and cataclysm and destruction.

The War Scroll is one of the original seven scrolls. But there are some manuscripts found in Cave 4 among fragmentary manuscripts that show evidence that this text existed in more than one version. This is evidence that this manuscript was composed over time and made up of different pieces, which explains how it could be that the author used poems that disagreed with the scroll's general concepts.

Links to Christianity?

A very important aspect of messianism at Qumran relates to the notion that the sectarians expected their world to be a precursor to the messianic era. They tried to create the perfect holy society, which would be a foretaste of the world to come. The communal meals for the sect were much the same as that at the Messianic Banquet.

Much of the messianic material in the scrolls has been seen to be pointing to Jesus and the New Testament. Virtually all the messianic titles and descriptions found in Second Temple literature, and especially the Dead Sea Scrolls, have been incorrectly made to refer to Jesus. But the ideas of the Messianic Banquet and the battle do not seem to have had much effect on Christianity.

There have been attempts to compare the meal at the End of Days with the Last Supper. Most scholars think that it tends more toward the Passover meal, which speaks of redemption in the past rather than in the future, but the fact is that some of the meal patterns are parallel between Christianity and the Last Supper and in the Qumran text. This is because these were all Jews who ate communal meals together according to dining patterns that were common at this time.

A Fundamental Effect on Jewish History

These ideas, this apocalyptic influence, seems to have had a fundamental effect on the history of the Jews because to some extent the Jewish Revolt against Rome in 66 to 73 CE and to a very great extent the revolt of 132 to 135 CE were fired by messianic aspirations. Just as the author of the War Scroll had expected that the Romans would be overthrown in the great messianic war, so some of the Jewish rebels in both revolts were convinced that the Romans would be overthrown and that victory over the Romans would bring the End of Days.

One thing is certain: for Christians and the Jews, the messianic heritage, which is all over the Dead Sea Scrolls, was a fundamental factor in the development of their religious faith and their way of life. The scrolls here again provide the earliest shaping of this idea. For the first time after the Hebrew Scriptures, the way the various parts of the messianic era come together can be seen, and this has exerted a powerful influence on both Christianity and Judaism.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What are the various messianic approaches evidenced by the Dead Sea Scrolls?
2. What is the relationship of Qumran messianism to the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish and Christian traditions?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

Collins, John J. *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Lecture 11: The Temple Scroll

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapters 15 and 16.

A Remarkable Scroll

The Temple Scroll is sixty-six columns long and is one of the scrolls that can actually be rolled out. Yet its upper part did not survive well and many of the columns are fragmentary.

The author might rather be called an author/redactor. To redact means to edit in the sense of secondarily appropriating existing sources and at the same time composing new sections to make the text flow together.

The text is loaded with places where the author rewrites the Torah and, in doing so, inserts interpretations. These interpretations can be small, microlevel interpretations where a word is added or subtracted, or they can be harmonizations in which material is greatly changed. Sometimes the author will even write his own ideas and put them into the scroll as if they were the word of God.

The author/redactor of this scroll so much wanted his text to look and sound like a veritable Torah that God had given to Israel that the author even went so far as to remove the immediacy of Moses by taking Moses's name out of the text. God doesn't speak to Moses here. God simply gives over His laws and interpretations in what is meant to look like direct revelation.

The Hidden Law

For the Dead Sea sectarians, there is an idea called the Hidden Law that goes along with the Revealed Law. The Hidden Law is the sectarian interpretations that take place through divinely inspired biblical interpretation. For the later rabbis, there was the idea that God had revealed a second law at Sinai, that He had revealed along with the Written Law the so-called Oral Law. This idea built on a Pharisaic concept that there were "traditions of the fathers" that actually went along with the written text of God's word. Only together did these constitute the teachings.

The Temple Scroll author had a different idea. He believed that there was a one-time revelation and all the meaning of the Torah was revealed. Hence, he alters the text by doing these harmonizations, by changing the order, by adding his own ideas and interpretations, and by proclaiming not that this is something that God spoke to Moses, but that *his* ideas are essentially what God gave to Israel.

The author used the original Torah to express his own ideas and approaches. What the author is suggesting is that many things not mentioned in God's Torah should be understood to be an integral part of God's revelation at Sinai. In this respect, he differs from almost every other known approach to

Judaism, even from that of the Dead Sea sectarians. He claims that that which supplements the Torah is in essence part of the Torah. This unique idea seems to indicate that this is a particular text with a particular author, but it does relate to other sectarian literature.

Sadducee Law

Scholars have known from the earliest publication of the Temple Scroll that the author had sources and reedited these sources into a version of the Torah. In doing so, he basically created the document by adapting these sources, which appear to date to a time before the Qumran sect, sometime in the second century BCE. These sources appear to stem from circles that followed the Sadducean laws. In some cases, these sources agree with laws found in the MMT document, which represents the early members of the sect and their protest against the Hasmonean priesthood and its following of Pharisaic laws.

The Sadducean approach to the interpretation of the Torah is the basis of the sources of the Temple Scroll and also of the MMT document, and these are just some of the ways that the Sadducean legal tradition reached the sectarians.

The Temple Scroll, probably put together around 120 BCE, makes use of these older sources. So this material will reveal much about Pre-Maccabean law. These documents give early evidence of the nature of Jewish law before the Maccabean Revolt and before the rise of the Qumran sect.

A Call for Change

Some have suggested that the Temple Scroll is a kind of messianic law. (It speaks about a messianic temple, after all.) The document says that a third courtyard should be added to the Temple precincts that is so large it would have covered the entire inhabited area of what was Jerusalem in the second century BCE.

One part of the text is called the Festival Calendar and spells out all the holidays as based on the holidays found in Leviticus and Numbers. The text also adds additional holidays, including two extra harvest festivals and an extra New Year in the spring. For each and every festival, it discusses the specific sacrifices and how to offer them.

The scroll says that the temple outlined in the scroll is to be used until the day of creation or blessing (that is, until the messianic era). The scroll specifically says that it is not about the messianic era; it is for the present. This document is a reformist document calling for complete changes in the nature of the law and society under the Hasmoneans.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the authors constantly level attacks against their opponents. This document, however, doesn't do that. This document just says, "This is what I think and these are the ways to live," and this can be contrasted with the tremendous invective in the other Dead Sea Scrolls texts. This is one reason why, when this was first published, many thought that it was not closely connected with the Qumran sect.

Many laws in the document, however, parallel materials in the MMT text, so it looks as though some sectarian gathered together documents and created the text. The scroll seems different because it is composed of pre-Sadducean texts, but the compilation as a whole expresses ideas closely related to, or perhaps even coming from, the Qumran sectarians.

Increasing Sanctity

One of the fundamental theological notions in the document is that God had commanded this Temple “to make his name dwell in the sanctuary.” The author of this text and the authors of the sources of this text believed that the real purpose of the Temple was to make God’s presence available to anyone.

In the Temple described in the Bible, there is a notion that a person enters farther and farther into the Temple through the outer courtyard to the inner courtyard to a Temple building to a Holy of Holies, while sanctity constantly increases.

In the Temple Scroll, it is clear that sanctity radiates from the Temple. The divine presence is located in the Temple building. From there it radiates to the courtyard and on out. As that sanctity goes out, it radiates to the entire land of Israel, and the Temple precinct was meant as a model of the desert camp of Israel as it grouped around the tabernacle.

There are three courtyards in the Temple: an inner, middle, and outer courtyard. In this respect, the Temple represents an expansion of the original Temple as built by King Solomon.

There was a tendency in ancient times to desire a rebuilt and expanded Temple. The first Temple was built by King Solomon and was much smaller than most would imagine; the Temple Mount on which it stood was probably about a quarter of the size of the present-day Temple Mount in Jerusalem. That Temple was destroyed in 586 BCE.

The Jews returned from the Babylonian Exile and by 520 BCE had built a structure that was a Temple, but that Temple was very small and there were constant urgings by the prophets that it should be enlarged or rebuilt. King Herod did rebuild the Temple, beginning in about 18 BCE. The Temple that he rebuilt was built on the platform that is now known as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. To build the Temple, he smoothed the top of the hill, filled in great earthworks, and multiplied the size of the mount by about four. There was built a Temple that was a wonder of the ancient world.

The desire to expand the Temple came out of a feeling that the sanctity of God that was located in the Temple needed to be properly housed and properly shared with the rest of the country and the rest of the world. There’s no question there was also an economic feature to the Temple, but the basic purpose for which it stood is what motivated those who put forward these plans for an expanded Temple.

The Law of the King

The Law of the King provides an understanding for the date of the scroll. The Law of the King begins with a command to have a king, important because there is a debate as to whether the law in Deuteronomy should be

translated "You *may* establish" or "You *must* establish a king over you." The Law of the King document understands it to be "must."

In the Hasmonean period, the descendants of the Maccabees ruled, but they were high priests. Only later did they call themselves kings, and many questioned their right to be rulers. Indeed, it seems the Qumran sectarians opposed Hasmonean rule on this basis. The text here puts forward the notion that the Torah requires a king. The implication is that these priests have no right to occupy the function that should belong to the king. Furthermore, the sectarians believed that the king had to be Jewish and was not allowed to make use of military force for predatory reasons.

There are reports that some of the Hasmonean kings did use military force to take over other lands (predatory reasons). It is likely that the text is arguing against the practices of these kings, and yet the text requires that the king raise an army and provide a royal guard constituted of one thousand men from each tribe. Throughout, the Temple Scroll imagines that all twelve tribes are in existence.

These guards are supposed to be trustworthy men who fear God, and they are supposed to remain with the king. The purpose of the law is to make sure no one attempts to attack the king. There was an episode during the Hasmonean period in which one of the leaders was killed after being tricked into an ambush.

The text indicates that it came into being sometime after or during the rule of Jonathan, who ruled from 152 to 143, because it was at that time that he was captured, circa 143, and killed.

This text also specifies a need for a council of elders. The council, according to the document, should have twelve priests, twelve Levites, and twelve princes of the tribes. The idea is that the king must consult the council. So it seems in many ways that there is a reaction to some negative practices going on in the Hasmonean era. There was a demand that the council of the Hasmonean era, which was made up of friends and associates of the Hasmoneans and which had a lot of aristocrats and other rich people in it, had to be replaced with a council made up according to the constitutional arguments of the Temple Scroll. So when it comes to dating the Law of the King, the author seems to tell us that the text must date from after 143 BCE. Not only did the Temple Scroll call for following Sadducee-like law regarding much of the Temple service and the holidays, but it called for a complete revision of the political system in the Hasmonean period and a replacing of the one that existed.

Relation of the Temple Scroll to the Dead Sea Sect

This was a reformist document that called for so many changes in the architecture of the Temple, Jewish law, and the political system that to date the scroll one should look for a period in which someone would want these changes because there were injustices and improprieties in the governmental system to which the scroll was reacting. Such a period is the Hasmonean period, around 143 BCE and a bit later. So the Temple Scroll is a polemic, albeit a quiet and peaceful one.

This scroll also has an added significance to everything discussed before. When it was discovered in 1967, it triggered a return to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls in their real Jewish context. Once this happened, it enabled scholars to make new strides in understanding the scrolls and their significance for Judaism and Christianity.

The Temple Scroll illustrated the links between its system of Jewish law and that found in the MMT document and other texts. Altogether, these documents have enabled the recovery of Sadducean laws on all kinds of subjects. Scholars have learned so much about the Sadducean legal system that they can understand how it served as the backdrop for the developments in Jewish law that are illustrated in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. What was the theology of Revelation that motivated the author of the Temple Scroll?
2. How did the author reedit and reorganize the Torah (Five Books of Moses) in order to express his own views on matters of Jewish law?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

Maier, Johann. *The Temple Scroll: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Salem, WI: Sheffield, 1985.

Lecture 12: The Scrolls, Judaism, and Christianity

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapters 23, 24, and 25.

The History of Judaism

The Dead Sea Scrolls show the inner development within Judaism in the third, second, and first centuries BCE. In this period, a major transition took place between the religion of ancient Israel (First Temple) and what became Judaism in the form of the Mishnah and the Talmud (the canonical documents of Rabbinic Judaism that set the stage for Medieval and modern Jewish thought and history).

The people of the Dead Sea Scrolls were not the Pharisees, the predecessors of the Talmudic Rabbis. Rather, the Pharisees only appear in polemical context when they are being argued against by the sectarians. This material, therefore, must be evaluated very carefully, because so much here seems to emphasize traditions of the sectarians, and it was ultimately the Pharisees and Sadducees who shaped the society.

The Scrolls' Influence on Rabbinic Tradition

Aspects found in Rabbinic Judaism are already observable in the scrolls. There is a great emphasis on Jewish law and on using interpretation to learn the law from the Bible. Further, there is great emphasis on the role of interpretation in understanding the conceptual framework of Judaism. Purity is very important, as are ethics.

At the same time, this is a group that has left the Temple, so the sectarians are a kind of forerunner of the Synagogue that would become so significant after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Also, the scrolls show criticisms of how the Second Temple operated and thereby provide insight into Second Temple operations. It is apparent that the sectarians inherited the traditions of the Zadokite priests and used these traditions to create, expand, and foster their own ideas pertaining to Jewish law.

Many scholars have argued that laws the later Rabbis claimed were ancient were really not, and the Rabbis' statements regarding earlier periods should be discarded. But the scrolls prove that some of the statements of the later Rabbis are accurate. A variety of laws in the scrolls reflect practices about which later Rabbis were speaking, so many of the reports of these Rabbis seem to be more authoritative than previously thought.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, collections were already being arranged by subject, significant because the arrangement of legal materials by subject was a major part of what became the early Rabbinic tradition. The example of mysticism in the scrolls shows that the kind of early mysticism found in rabbinic sources is already presaged in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Synagogue and Messianism

After the destruction of the Temple, the Synagogue, which had begun to emerge somewhat earlier, moved to center stage. The sectarians, who had removed themselves from the Temple, followed a kind of proto-Synagogue approach by praying on their own and not participating in the Temple. They lived a life in which all that was important was the life of the sect, the study of the Torah, and the offering of prayers.

The Dead Sea Scrolls also show the extent to which messianism was important to all Jews. There were kinds of Jewish messianism that did not make it into the first two centuries CE, but somehow these forms of mysticism remained underground within the Jewish communities. By the third and fourth centuries, messianic Apocalyptic ideas reemerged in Jewish thought. Within the rabbinic community, there was a turning toward ideas of mysticism, magic, and supernatural ideas.

Important to both Judaism and Christianity is the way the scrolls show the standardization of the Hebrew Bible. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, biblical texts date from the third, second, and first centuries BCE. But in the first century CE and the scrolls from Masada, there no longer are variant text forms. This text, the so-called Masoretic text, over time became the normative form of the biblical text. This is not the only form, because in Christianity the biblical text that was copied into the New Testament is copied from the Greek Septuagint Bible, which often has a text that is different from the Hebrew Bible; but most of the variations between the earlier Bibles and the later Bibles were a result of the process of standardization in which the Rabbinic Masoretic text pushes out the other biblical texts. This is all observable in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Early Church and the Qumran Community

When the scrolls were first found, a number of naïve ideas were put forward. One was the assumption that the Essenes might be proto-Christians. But despite the sharing of some ideas, it simply doesn't make sense to label them as such. There is no evidence that Jesus or John the Baptist or any other major Christian figure was at Qumran. There is no New Testament at Qumran, and there is no evidence that any Christian leader is mentioned in the scrolls.

By and large, the ideas of Christianity are not found in these texts, but the scrolls are helpful in understanding the figure of Jesus. All the messianic figures in the text are combined into the figure of Jesus. It is clear that early Christianity inherited a wide variety of messianic ideologies from Judaism, brought those together, and effectively argued that Jesus represented the totality of the messianic traditions.

There are important parallels between the early Christian church and the Qumran community. The early church had some communal property and was a close-knit group with official disciples. The early Christian community over time moved away from observance of the Law.

But the early Christian community did not accept the idea of ritual purity as a borderline between it and other Jews and did not practice the kind of messianism found in the sectarian groups. The sectarians expected a great war

at the End of Days, but most Christian texts expected a peaceful progression to the Messianic Era.

On the assumption that the early church was a celibate community, some scholars have argued that the Qumran sectarians must have been celibate. The problem is that this contradicts Qumran texts that speak about a man and his wife and laws that assume a married situation for the Qumran sectarians. So it is difficult to conclude that the celibacy described by Josephus about the Essenes is the same as that of early Christianity.

In many cases where some have thought that the Christian text has drawn on sources that were in error or which had been intentionally modified, there are cases where it can be shown that the Christian text drew instead from text with genuine textual variance. On the other hand, looking at the textual variance available at Qumran often convinces scholars that some of the variances found in the New Testament are actually intentional variations in which the text has been changed so that it will carry a certain message.

Ongoing Influence

Many Dead Sea texts seem to presage the end of the sect, and once it came to an end, it of course no longer had a direct influence on Judaism or Christianity. In fact, there are serious questions as to whether it even had an indirect influence.

The fact that Qumran was destroyed in 68 CE seems to draw to a close the era of the Qumran scrolls. A number of scrolls were gathered at Masada, but Masada itself fell in 73 CE. This means that the bulk of the Mishnah and of the New Testament was created after Qumran ceased to exist. The influence on those groups that created the Mishnah and the early Christian text was probably indirect rather than direct. Yet there is one area in which the Qumran sect's influence seems to have been great.

The Qumran sectarians seem to have believed in an immediacy of messianism. The only way to understand the early Christian movement, as well as the two Jewish revolts, is to understand that they had a strong messianic background.

Clearly, those who molded the early Christian traditions and who led those revolts must have taken the notion of violent messianic overthrow seriously. The notions found in the Dead Sea Scrolls would have been typical of the literature and ideals that existed at that time and that influenced the leaders of the sect and of the wider Jewish community. This means that to a great extent the heritage of the Qumran scrolls is in the area of messianism.

Rather than thinking that the scrolls are Christian or evidencing Christian ideas, the texts have to be looked at as intrinsically Jewish. Their ideas had a basis in Hebrew Scripture and reached the various sources of early Christianity and, hence, the early church.

Some medieval copies of documents found in the Qumran scrolls were already found in the Cairo Ginezah. In the Middle Ages, some of the Dead Sea Scrolls apparently continued to circulate and may have influenced a group called the Karaites, a literalist Jewish sect that chose to eschew the Oral Torah and live according to the written Torah only.

This material may have survived underground (among remnants of the Dead Sea sect, for instance). The other possibility is that discoveries of texts were made both in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and it may be that some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were received earlier than was known and became part of the ongoing Jewish tradition.

The Shaping of Christianity and Judaism

As far as can be seen, all effects of the sectarians on early Jewish tradition ended around the destruction of the Temple. In Judaism, the sectarian influence was felt until the third and fourth centuries. From the scrolls, it is clear that the relationship of early Judaism and Christianity was a dynamic one, and that they each drew in different ways from the Judaism that existed before. They both drew messianic ideas, but these messianic ideas in Judaism called for a kind of redemption that argued for the observance of Jewish law and the following of the ancient Jewish traditions.

For Christianity, the messianism that had come to the fore in the Qumran scrolls and which molded Christianity called for a different kind of approach. The observance of the Law and the attempt to follow the Torah as it was understood by the Jews would no longer be necessary. The Qumran scrolls have provided a better understanding of those developments, and it is because of the scrolls that one can chart so well this history and the way in which these two traditions each went its own way.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. How do we understand the Dead Sea Scrolls as part of the wider history of Judaism in Second Temple times?
2. What contributions do the scrolls make to our understanding of the rise of Christianity and the early Christian texts?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Lecture 13: Controversial Messianic Texts

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, chapter 21.

Expanding on the Book of Daniel

The Book of Daniel is found in a number of manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scholars have long debated when Daniel was composed, but it is recognized as one of the latest books of the Hebrew Bible. At Qumran, there are also a variety of pseudo-Danielic texts, documents that seem to be expansions on the Book of Daniel.

Daniel is an apocalyptic book presaging the End of Days and includes mystical visions of God. In the Greek Book of Daniel, there are additions that indicate that some people obviously thought there was more that had to be said in the name of Daniel.

The Son of God Text

Among these additions to Daniel (in Aramaic) in the Dead Sea Scrolls is a text known in the field as the Son of God text, which is really a type of apocryphal Daniel text. The manuscript is dated to the first century BCE. In general terms, texts in Aramaic are considered pre-Qumranian.

In Daniel 7: 13–14 (Hebrew Bible), there is an enigmatic line:

“As I looked on in the night vision, one like a human being came with the clouds of Heaven . . . Dominion, glory, and kingship were given to him. All peoples and nations of every language must serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away and his kingship one that shall not be destroyed.”

The Qumran addition to Daniel mentions a king, and then somebody, thought to be Daniel, falls before the throne of the king, assumed to be the ruler of Babylon. The king has had a dream that is going to be interpreted in an apocalyptic manner.

The speaker says to the king, “You have been angry from eternity and your years have been spent in fear. I will interpret your vision and what will come to pass.” This is typical of Daniel, who explains dreams. “Because of the great kings, there will be great distress on the earth. There will be a war between the peoples and a great slaughter in the cities.” This is a kind of description of the Hellenistic period.

The speaker goes on, “Fighting among kings one with another . . . Then there will arise the final king and he will be great among the earth. The nations shall make peace with him and all will serve him. . . . The son of the Great Master shall he be called and by His name he will be called. He will be said to be the son of God and they will call him the son of the Most High.”

Clearly in this passage, some kind of redeeming figure is going to be called the messiah.

There is a parallel to this passage in the New Testament in Luke 1: 32–33. Gabriel, speaking about the newborn Jesus, says the following: “He will be great and will be called the son of the most high and he will reign over the House of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

What seems to be the case is that the “son of God” here is a designation for a messianic figure in Luke, just as it was among some Qumran sectarians. It is important to remember that all the messianic terms in the Old Testament were said to refer to Jesus, and so apparently the term “son of God.”

Clearly the text is describing the destruction of the wicked. There is to be a period of destruction followed by redemption. This is a text that fits well into pseudo-Danielic (similar to the Book of Daniel) literature. These are prophecies pertaining to what will happen at the end of Roman rule over the land of Israel. They expect that there is going to be a restoration and then the Messianic Era. There will be world peace after the evildoers are defeated, and “God’s son” is a designation for the messiah.

The question is whether this can be connected to Christianity. There is a parallel in Luke who uses the same terminology. But it seems that this text is an example of one of the Qumran messianic texts that reaches way back into earlier years, and it shows that for some Jews “son of God” was early on a messianic designation.

For that reason, it should not be a surprise that this designation is used for Jesus in Luke. The so-called Son of God text from Qumran indicates the great extent to which early Christian ideas were drawn from the heritage of sectarian Judaism.

The Pierced Messiah

The Pierced Messiah text is a text that is so called by many scholars, but in reality it should be called the War Rule. The War of the Sons of Light Versus the Sons of Darkness is meant to occur at the onset of the Messianic Era. In this war, all the evildoers are supposed to be destroyed and good people will prevail.

This document is fragmentary and, initially, scholars identified it as a Pierced Messiah text, but they were working with one small fragment. This small fragment was incorrectly interpreted to be about the head of the sectarian group, referred to as the descendant of the House of David, actually being pierced and killed. To achieve this translation, the Hebrew language had to be bent to create a text that never could have existed in ancient Hebrew. Further, one would have to ignore the entire context of the text known from the main War Scroll as well as from other texts that deal with the Messianic War. Further, this phrase is only one fragment of the text, but actually there are quite a number of fragments that give a completely different idea of what the text is really about.

The Pierced Messiah text shares language with another text known as Blessings. This text recalls the presence of angels in the community, something heard about in various other texts.

Another fragment actually mentions the four archangels, which is something that Daniel talks about. There are fragments of the War Rule that mention graves and corpses and the return of troops to their base. There is mention of the destruction of evil and there is mention of military horns. The enemy is identified as the Romans, which was also found in the War Scroll. The text in one fragmentary passage describes what is going to happen in the End of days when the Prince of the Congregation, this messianic figure, is going to lead the sectarians.

Some leader of the enemy is going to be captured and they will bring him before the Prince of the Congregation. The idea that there is going to be the execution of a pierced messiah, which of course would have been a kind of model for the crucifixion, is false, but this is the passage that has been so controversial:

“As it is written in the Book of Isaiah, the Prophet, The thickets in the forest shall be hacked away with iron, and the Lebanon trees in their majesty fall, but a shoot (Messiah) shall grow out of the stump of Jesse. A twig shall sprout from his stock . . . shoot of David, and they will be judged, the . . . Prince of the Congregation will kill him (the leader of Romans) and the army of with drums and with dances. And the high priest commanded . . . the corpses of the Kittim (Romans).”

This passage is an interpretation of Isaiah that parallels the Peshier Isaiah A text. The Peshier is a book that interprets the Book of Isaiah as if it is happening now, as a kind of contemporizing biblical prophecy. On the other hand, the sprout from Jesse is an idea that comes from Jeremiah and it clearly refers to the Davidic messiah. This sprout is maneuvered over to become part of the Isaiah text so that it becomes a messianic designation.

There is the mention of a word later on that is taken to mean “pierced,” but in reality refers to dances that are to take place at the End of Days during this absolutely happy occasion. What is really being described in the text is the destruction of the leader of the Romans by the Prince of the Congregation. There is no question that this text has nothing to do with the piercing of the messiah. It is a text describing the hope that the Romans would be defeated by a messianic figure, the shoot of Jesse.

Jewish Messianism

Another interesting messianic text is known as the Messianic Apocalypse. This is a classical statement of Jewish messianism, but some scholars incorrectly thought that it might presage Christianity.

“The heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, will obey God’s Messiah, who will not turn aside from the commandments of the holy ones. Take strength in his service, you who seek the Lord. Will you not find the Lord in this, all you who wait patiently in your hearts? For the Lord will visit the pious ones, and the righteous ones He will call by name.”

This quotation has much in agreement with various Jewish texts, including the daily prayer known as the Standing Devotion. The text mentions the revival of the dead (the Resurrection). The Qumran sectarians seem to have believed in the revival of the dead at the End of Days, as did almost all Jews,

as found in the Book of Daniel. Some of those who want to find pre-Christian strains in the scrolls have pointed toward this text. But this text does not describe the resurrection of the messiah, which is a distinctly Christian idea. It describes the resurrection of the dead after the coming of the messiah, something found in almost all Jewish versions of messianism and early Christianity.

So it again is an example of how Christianity makes use of ideas that are in common with Judaism. One can not find here the unique Christian idea that the messiah will die and be resurrected. The notion of messiah here is very Jewish. The text is typical Jewish messianism, which is the basis of the distinct Christian idea that Jesus himself would be resurrected.

Mysticism and Magic

Another area of interest is the material pertaining to mysticism and magic in the scrolls. There are some interesting texts called the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. There are thirteen of these, indicating apparently there was one for each week, following the solar quarter of thirteen weeks. This pattern followed the Qumran calendar, which sought to replace the lunar calendar of the Pharisees.

In the texts, there were a variety of versions in which the divine throne is described, which links intimately to the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel. The text assumes that one can see elements of the divine through mystic vision. Further mention of the idea of a divine throne takes place in Ben Sira 49, when the text speaks about Ezekiel's seeing a vision of glory.

This and other mystical texts indicate that there is a strong mystical bent to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The sectarians seem to have tried to gain understanding of God that goes beyond what a normal person had. For the Qumran sectarians, it seems that mysticism was not really a transformative experience, but meant more to have a special and close relationship to God. Similar ideas are also found in the War Scroll.

Sometimes the sectarians seemed to cross the line between mysticism and magic. Magicians tried to get God to do what they wanted Him to irrespective of His plans. A number of these texts contain magical spells to protect one from the magic of another person. Furthermore, there are texts that preach staying away from magic.

All this indicates that magic was indeed practiced by the ancient sectarians. Most importantly, the mysticism existing in the scrolls has to be recognized as one of the forerunners of later Jewish mysticism. A study of Qumran mysticism is essential to understanding the ways in which early Jewish mysticism impacted on later Judaism.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. How have certain texts regarding messianism fed the ongoing controversies regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls?
2. What do these texts really teach us about the nature of Jewish messianism in Second Temple times?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest

Collins, John J. *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Lecture 14: The Scrolls in Public Culture

The **Suggested Reading** for this lecture is Lawrence H. Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*, introduction and chapters 1–3.

Serious and Sensational

The Dead Sea Scrolls have effectively become an icon of culture and civilization. There are two overarching categories of interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first is the normal, responsible, and appropriate mode of interest. This is evidenced when people write books about the scrolls and debate their meaning for Judaism, Christianity, and civilization, and when people experience the scrolls at exhibits and in museums.

The second category of interest is evidenced by sensationalistic articles in tabloid publications and by people who come up with strange theories about the scrolls. There are apocalyptic groups that think they are going to re-create the Dead Sea sect or who expect some kind of a great war or who use the scrolls to validate a far-out religious view. Another idea is that some believe that the scrolls contain deep mysteries. Why do the scrolls command such interest in such radically different ways? One idea is that the scrolls are simply great literature that tell about history and civilization from a time when Judaism and Christianity were developing in important ways. Other readers of the scrolls are looking for a *deus ex machina*, for some kind of appearance by God to solve humanity's problems. Most people recognize that humans face a set of difficult problems, and that it is up to humans to solve those problems. On the other hand, there are those who think that there is going to be a miraculous appearance by God, and that this miraculous appearance will solve everything.

What these people fail to recognize is that the people who wrote these scrolls had solutions to problems that weren't generally accepted by others, even if to some extent they influenced everyone. And they fail to understand that the notion of this *deus ex machina* is one that will, in fact, prevent people from facing up to the real difficulties that have to be solved.

The Curse

Another part of the Dead Sea Scrolls story is the "curse of the Dead Sea Scrolls." This usually refers to the phenomenon of a person's losing the balance of how to look at the issues in the scrolls, and this happens to both people new to the study of the scrolls and to people who have long been immersed in Dead Sea Scrolls study. This person will no longer see the totality of the Dead Sea Scrolls excavations, the scrolls' corpus, and the issues of early Judaism and Christianity. Instead, the lack of balance could result in strange behavior, such as plagiarism, when someone loses the sense of right

and wrong. With the scrolls, there is a kind of negative magic, where people who are fine scholars can suddenly begin, based on some feature of the scrolls, to come up with crazy theories.

Much of what has happened with the scrolls has to do with the debate over who the sectarians were, or over who composed the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this debate, there are a variety of points of view from normal scholars who studied the material.

But there are also people who suggest, for example, that all the scrolls come from the Jerusalem Temple, despite the fact that the scrolls say the opposite, or that Qumran itself was really a trade emporium, despite the fact that they can't explain the presence of the scrolls there, or that it was a fortress, or a book production facility. All these explanations have in common the selection of one detail and the loss of scholarly objectivity in which this one detail becomes the driving force of an entire theory.

Popular Interest in the Scrolls

There are a large number of television programs regarding the scrolls. These shows feature an interesting mix of the trends of sensationalism and serious study. The sensational aspects of these programs are certainly intended to generate ratings, but are also connected with the idea of "inverting reality," the phenomenon in which the press continues to believe things that are similar to those things believed by irresponsible scholars, especially as regards the scrolls' connection with Christianity.

From the days of Edmund Wilson and his books on the Dead Sea Scrolls of the 1950s, the media have over and over assumed that the real truth of the scrolls, or at least that which is going to get people to watch programs, is that they must reveal the truth about Jesus, John the Baptist, and the early Christians. No matter how many times they have been shown the entire text in translation, no matter how many times they've been told about scientific and increasingly accurate carbon-14 dating, the media acts as if the real reality is that of unsupportable theories.

The *Biblical Archaeological Review*, though sensationalistic in some ways, constantly tries to present responsible and appropriate views. Further, the many museum exhibits that have been put together by the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation, the Israel Antiquities Authority, and the Israel Museum over and over attempt to teach responsible views on the scrolls, but no matter what, the general media continue to assume that the scrolls contain the secret of Christian origins. In fact, some of the media don't even realize that the scrolls are Jewish texts, and as noted, the only way the scrolls can be used to understand Christianity is by understanding that the scrolls are the texts of the Judaism that existed before Christianity arose.

Other Dimensions to the Scrolls in Society

The Dead Sea Scrolls, which themselves preach hatred of outsiders, have become a stimulus in society for the improvement of Jewish-Christian relations. This has happened because the scrolls brought together a large community of academics (Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic) who worked together on the scrolls and on the interpretation of early Judaism.

The scrolls have led to a complete reevaluation of the study of early Christianity and an understanding of the extent to which it cannot take place except in the context of the study of early Judaism. This early Judaism, in turn, must be studied in the widest possible context, understanding the Judaism of the land of Israel and of the various groups of Jews, including those in the Diaspora.

Once one understands that there is an overall partnership in the study of Judaism and early Christianity, there emerges a sense that Judaism and Christianity, despite the split, have common origins. In these common origins are the seeds for the new relationship formed since Vatican II, first in Jewish-Catholic relations and then in the relationship between Jews and various other groups.

Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibits

The Dead Sea Scrolls exhibits represent the raising of enormous amounts of money, the bringing together of groups of scholars, and the assembly of a widespread American audience, all of which is an even greater bit of evidence for the scrolls' positive effect on intergroup relations. At the same time this represents the victory of those whose interest in the scrolls is serious (that is, marked by genuine interest in a cultural artifact of extreme importance).

The scrolls also represent for many people the land of Israel. In Israel itself, the scrolls are housed in two museums, one of which has a permanent exhibit dedicated to the scrolls (the Shrine of the Book). There one can also see a model of Second Temple-period Jerusalem. The placement of this model next to the Shrine of the Book represents an important statement about the significance of the scrolls for understanding Judaism as a whole. It represents the statement that the real significance of the scrolls is in understanding the wider context of Judaism and the background Christianity.

In Israel, the scrolls have also taken on another aspect. In 1947, when Eliezer Sukenik first purchased some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, he immediately picked up on the fact that the Dead Sea Scrolls would teach the connection of the Jews to the land of Israel. This is definitely an aspect in which the scrolls have functioned in the State of Israel to inculcate the values of the return to the land and the renewal of the Jewish people.

Pursuing Interest in the Scrolls

The scrolls have become a cultural icon. The material has an instinctive draw, and functions to create an educational opportunity. At the same time the scrolls provide an emotional link across the millenia. They also give us a sense of the origins of the various communities that made up ancient Judaism.

A variety of tools have come into being that allow those interested in the Dead Sea Scrolls to pursue their interest. On the technical scholarly side, there are publications that allow scholars to get photographs of the text via computers or books, and these also supply this material to people with a more general interest. There is an encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Web sites with reliable information (along with many Web sites with outlandish information). These research tools have come about because of the

wide interest in the scrolls and, as a result, the study of the scrolls has moved forward with an increasing momentum.

The Future of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The hope is that the scrolls will move from a more secluded field of interest to a general, mainstream discussion of Judaism and Christianity. So far religious traditions have not assimilated the Dead Sea Scrolls either for historical or religious issues, and yet the scrolls have a lot to teach about interpreting Judaism and Christianity and their respective Scriptures. So the development of reactions to these materials, despite the fact that they are not official or canonical, is important to assimilate the scrolls into the history of this period.

Scholarship has to expand beyond discussing the scrolls as if the core interest is an inner corpus relating only to itself. More work needs to be done on the ways the scrolls relate to the history of Judaism and Christianity.

What Have We Learned from the Scrolls?

The amazing thing about the scrolls is the feeling that one is reading text that literally came out of the ground and that somehow allows people to bridge a gap of two thousand years. Many questions that people have today were the questions of the Dead Sea sectarians. The issues of Judaism and Christianity raised then are still being raised today, and this is perhaps the reason that in an overarching way, these scrolls generated so much interest.

The scrolls have truly become a part of civilization. Something that lay buried for two thousand years has suddenly become a mainstay of modern civilization. When scholars learn something new about the scrolls, there is undoubtedly a feeling that they are uncovering something that no one else knows, something that goes back into the age of antiquity. And there is further hope for the future. Scholars are now on the verge of new types of discoveries in terms of the wider relevance of the scrolls. Stay tuned.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING



Questions

1. How have the scrolls functioned within the context of our wider intellectual and religious culture?
2. What factors have led to the exaggerated and sensational claims about the scrolls that constantly appear in the general press?

Suggested Reading

Schiffman, Lawrence H. "Inverting Reality: The Dead Sea Scrolls in the Popular Media." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 12, 2005, pp. 24–37.

Other Books of Interest

Davies, Philip R., George J. Brooke, and Phillip R. Calaway. *The Complete World of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2002.

Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Suggested Reading:

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Doubleday, 1995.

Other Books of Interest:

Collins, John J. *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Davies, Philip R., George J. Brooke, and Phillip R. Calaway. *The Complete World of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2002.

Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

Maier, Johann. *The Temple Scroll: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Salem, WI: Sheffield, 1985.

Schuller, Eileen. "Women in the Dead Sea Scrolls." *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*. By James C. VanderKam and Peter Flint. Leiden, NE: Brill, 1999.

VanderKam, James C., and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

These books are available online through www.modernscholar.com or by calling Recorded Books at 1-800-636-3399.