

Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls

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Abstract

The present study is intended as a synthesis of the current state of research on religion in the Qumran community as articulated in the Dead Sea Scrolls. We treat here religion both in thought and in practice. The former refers to the theological belief system of the Qumran community: God, dualism and predestination and eschatology, messianism, and resurrection; the latter indicates the way that the religious ideals of the Qumran community were actualized in daily life: formation of Jewish law, temple, sacrifice, and prayer, and ritual and purity. Our intention is to present the critical issues (and texts) as they relate to each of these subjects and the various scholarly models associated with their study.

Introduction

The Dead Sea Scrolls comprise a collection of around 800 documents discovered in eleven caves in the Judean Desert beginning in 1947. These scrolls represent the library of a schismatic Jewish community that inhabited the nearby ancient settlement of Qumran from the middle of the 2nd century BCE until its destruction by the Romans in 68 CE (Schiffman 1995; Magness 2002; VanderKam and Flint 2002). The scrolls describe a community of primarily disenfranchised priests who rejected the Temple in Jerusalem as defiled and administered by corrupt priests and therefore withdrew from the center of Jewish life in Jerusalem (Schiffman 1999). This community, often identified as the Essenes from Jewish and classical sources (Vermees and Goodman 1989; Cansdale 1997; Beall 2004; see, however, Baumgarten 2004), established a sectarian settlement in Qumran, adopting the call of Isaiah 40:3, in order to “prepare the way of the Lord” (1QS 8:15). The community was led at Qumran by an individual identified only by the sobriquet “Teacher of Righteousness.” While at Qumran, the community fervently studied Scripture and other sacred works, meticulously observed Jewish law, and actively awaited the unfolding drama of the end of days, which they believed was imminent in their own time.

The full-scale study of religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls was inaugurated by H. Ringgren in *The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, first published in Swedish in 1961 and translated into English two years later (reprinted in 1995; cf. Nötscher 1956). In this work, Ringgren attempted

to identify the dominant theological motifs found at Qumran. His methodology involved a careful search of the then available scrolls and the presentation of their theological content in categories familiar from general biblical and theological studies (i.e., “God,” “Man,” “Eschatology,” etc.). Ringgren’s harmonizing approach is the direct result of the lack of a systematic theological statement by the Qumran community. No sectarian work is entirely devoted to espousing the community’s unique theological outlook; at the same time, nearly all the community’s works are suffused with theological elements. There are in fact several different theologies present even in the works composed by the Qumran community. Some of these discrepancies reflect the historical development of the community that eventually inhabited the sectarian settlement at Qumran (Collins 2003, 2006), while others reflect the basic assumption that the Qumran community did not always espouse one uniform theology (Charlesworth in Ringgren 1995, xv–xxi).

In the years since Ringgren’s work appeared, scholars have analyzed numerous aspects of religion at Qumran. In particular, a wealth of scholarship appeared in the wake of the full availability of the scrolls in the early 1990s and has since continued unabated (Collins and Kugler, 2000; cf. Deasley 2000). The present study is intended as a synthesis of the current state of research on religion at Qumran as articulated in the Dead Sea Scrolls. We treat here religion both in thought and in practice. The former refers to the theological belief system of the Qumran community; the latter indicates the way that the religious ideals of the Qumran community were actualized in daily life. This work does not presume to be comprehensive. Such a task no doubt would require longer presentations of each issue as well as others not treated here (Collins 2000a, 6–7). Our intention is to present the critical issues (and texts) as they relate to each of these subjects and the various scholarly models and debates associated with their study.

The Qumran library

The 800 or so Hebrew and Aramaic (and a few Greek) documents found in the Qumran library are generally understood to comprise three distinct classes of texts (Newsom 1990; Dimant 1995, 2000a):

(1) Biblical manuscripts: With the exception of Esther, every book from what would later comprise the canon of the Hebrew Bible is represented at Qumran in varying degrees (Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich 1999; Ego, Lange, and De Troyer 2004). The absence of Esther may reflect an explicit rejection of its authoritative status and the festival of Purim or is merely an accident of the way that the manuscripts were discovered (Talmon 1995). The most widely represented books at Qumran are Psalms (39 manuscripts), Deuteronomy (32 manuscripts), and Isaiah (22 manuscripts), reflecting their importance in fashioning the community’s worldview. While nearly all the biblical books are represented at Qumran, the actual text of each of these

manuscripts often varies among the ancient textual versions of the Hebrew Bible (Masoretic Text (Hebrew), Septuagint (Greek), Samaritan Pentateuch (Hebrew)), and non-aligned textual traditions (Tov 2001).

(2) General literature of Second Temple Judaism: The Qumran community preserved within their library several works that represent the eclectic literary production of late Second Temple period Judaism (ca. 3rd century BCE–1st century CE). A large portion of these texts are “biblically based,” in the sense that they are similar in style and content to earlier biblical books. Many of these texts were previously known in their translated versions (i.e., Greek, Ethiopic) as part of the Apocrypha (e.g., Ben Sira, Tobit) and Pseudepigrapha (e.g., Jubilees, 1 Enoch). In addition, the Qumran corpus has yielded a wealth of similar apocryphal literature that was previously unknown (e.g., Genesis Apocryphon, Pseudo-Daniel) (Flint 1999). The term “parabiblical” has been adopted in order to refer to writings that draw their inspiration from biblical texts, characters, or stories (Brooke 1998; Campbell 2005). The Dead Sea Scrolls contain additional general Second Temple period Jewish writings including wisdom literature, apocalyptic texts, poetical and liturgical texts, and legal works.

(3) Works composed by the community: The collection of communal writings highlights the daily life and worldview of the community. These documents include their sectarian rule books (e.g., the Rule of the Community, the Damascus Document), works of biblical interpretation (e.g., Pesharim), poetical and liturgical texts (e.g., Hodayot), eschatological writings (e.g., War Scroll), and calendrical documents. The sectarian provenance of any particular document is generally argued based on the use of unique language and style as well as themes recognizable from known sectarian literature (Newsom 1990). Several documents, however, cannot be easily classified employing these rubrics and their specific provenance remains disputed (e.g., Words of the Luminaries (4Q504–6); Chazon 1992). Moreover, there is variation even within the undisputed sectarian writings. Some texts come from early phases of the Qumran community or perhaps from an earlier parent group (e.g., the Damascus Document, the Halakhic Letter). Some of the documents available to us are in fact composite productions of several different related sectarian communities (Hempel 2000).

Religion in practice

THE FORMATION OF JEWISH LAW AT QUMRAN

Every aspect of the religious life at Qumran was guided by the community’s particular understanding and application of Jewish law. Indeed, Jewish law was so critical to the community that disagreement over its proper observance was likely the primary motivating force behind the community’s withdrawal from Jerusalem (Schiffman 1990, 1999; A. Baumgarten 1992). For the

Qumran community, the Torah, with its record of Moses' revelation at Sinai, represented the ultimate source of Jewish law. The Torah's legal system, however, is limited in scope and application, a problem encountered by all Jewish groups in the rapidly expanding world of Second Temple Judaism. Each of these groups found some way to account for their own legislative activity within the framework of the primacy of the Torah and the revelation at Sinai (Urbach 1975, 286–314; Schiffman 1989a; Shemesh and Werman 2003).

The Qumran community believed in a progressive revelation of law in which Moses' receipt of the Torah was the first of many revelations of law (Wieder 1962, 67–70; Schiffman 1975; Baumgarten 1977a; Fishbane 2004, 364–66). The classical prophets were understood as the second stage in this process (1QS 8:15–16; Jassen 2006). Community leaders thought of themselves as recipients of the most recent revelation providing instruction on how to fulfill Mosaic law and regarding the development of non-Mosaic legislative activity. This theory of law is encapsulated in the sectarian legal categories of the *nigleh* (“revealed,” pl. *niglot*) and the *nistar* (“hidden,” pl. *nistarot*) (Schiffman 1975, 23–32; 1995, 247–49; Shemesh and Werman 1998). The *nigleh* indicates the law that has been revealed to all of Israel, as found in the Torah and its basic understanding. The *nistar* refers to the laws and interpretations that were revealed only to the members of the Qumran community (CD 3:12–16), yet hidden from other Jews. While the community had access to both the revealed and hidden law and therefore the totality of Jewish law, other Jews were only aware of the revealed law. Yet, they are still condemned for their non-observance of the hidden laws:

Every initiate into the Council of the Community (*Yahad*) is to enter the covenant in full view of all the volunteers. He shall take upon himself a binding oath to return to the Law of Moses, according to all that He commanded, with all his heart and all his mind, to all that has been revealed (*nigleh*) from it to the Sons of Zadok – priests and preservers of the covenant, seekers of his will – and the majority of the men of their covenant (that is, those who have jointly volunteered for His truth and to live by what please Him). Each one who thus enters the covenant by oath is to separate himself from all of the perverse men, they who walk in the wicked way, for such are not reckoned as part of His covenant. They “have not sought Him nor inquired of His statutes” (Zeph 1:6) so as to discover the hidden laws (*nistarot*) in which they err to their shame. Even the revealed laws (*niglot*) they knowingly transgress, thus stirring God's judgmental wrath and full vengeance: the curses of the Mosaic covenant. He will bring against them weighty judgments, eternal destruction with none spared. (1QS 5:7–13; all translations, with minor modification, follow Parry and Tov 2004–2005).

The community's receipt of the *nistar* was viewed as the most recent stage in the progressive revelation of law, which is understood as having undergone several changes throughout its existence (1QS 8:15; 9:13–14). This legislative program would stand in place until the messianic era, when the progressive revelation would encounter a new stage (Wieder 1962, 69–70).

Although the receipt of the *nistar* is conceptualized as a revelatory experience, it did not actually involve direct human–divine communication. Rather, the leaders of the community uncovered the *nistar* through the inspired exegesis of Scripture (Fraade 1998). The sectarian leaders were considered to have been endowed with the necessary tools to read Scripture under such inspiration and receive juridical instruction. This activity made up part of the nightly communal study sessions described in the sectarian literature (1QS 6:6–8). The results of these study sessions were presumably collected into various thematic legal compendiums known as *serakhim* (Schiffman 1975, 60–68), now imbedded in the community’s larger legal works such as the Rule of the Community (1QS, 4Q255–264, 5Q11; see Wernberg-Møller 1957; Licht 1965; Alexander and Vermes 1998) and the Damascus Document (CD, 4Q266–273, 5Q12, 6Q15; see Rabin 1954; Schechter 1970; Ginzberg 1976; Baumgarten 1996).

TEMPLE, SACRIFICE, AND PRAYER

The centrality and importance of the Temple in Jerusalem was a near universal principle of Second Temple Judaism. The members of the Qumran community likewise held the Temple in high esteem and recognized it as the nexus between the human and divine realms. At the same time, the Qumran community believed that the present Temple was in a state of impurity and administered by corrupt priests (see 1QpHab 8:8–13; 12:7–9; CD 4:15–18; 6:15–16; 4QMMT) and therefore withdrew from participation in the life of the Temple and its sacrificial cult. Thus, the community was forced to find some alternative expression for its worship. The Damascus Document’s discussion of the sacrificial cult as a present reality and the discovery of several buried animal bones at Qumran suggested to some scholars that the community offered sacrifices of their own in the desert (Allegro 1957, 98, 112–13; Schechter 1970, 47; Cross 1995, 85–86). This proposal, however, has been rejected by more recent assessments of the literary and archaeological evidence (Baumgarten 1977b; Magness 2002). Thus, if the community did not offer sacrifices in the desert, how did they continue to express the devotional experience provided by the Temple?

Scholars have identified two primary ways in which the Qumran community compensated for the loss of sacrifice. Prayer is presented as a viable alternative to sacrifice in the community’s writings (Baumgarten 1977b; Schiffman 1987; Talmon 1989). Thus, the Rule of the Community identifies the “offering of the lips” (*terumat sefatayim*), the sectarian term for prayer (see 1QS 10:6), as equivalent, if not superior, to sacrifice (1QS 9:4–5). Similarly, the Damascus Document rewrites Proverbs 15:8 (“the prayer of the upright pleases him”) such that it now emphasizes the equivalency of prayer to sacrifice: “But the prayer of the righteous ones (is) like an agreeable meal offering” (CD 11:18–21 = 4Q271 5 i 12–15; Ginzberg 1976, 188).

Early on in Qumran research, S. Talmon suggested the community possessed a “manual of benedictions,” similar to a later *siddur* (prayer book), that contained the prayers recited by the community together with instructions for when these prayers should be recited (1958–1959). Although Talmon’s hypothesis was not borne out by the full discovery of the scrolls, his proposal that the community possessed a determined set of prayers intended to be recited at specific times is correct. Talmon was guided in this proposal by a hymn that appears at the end of the Rule of the Community that seems to outline the liturgical cycle of the community:

He shall bless him at the times ordained of God:

When light begins its dominion – each time it returns – and when, as ordained, it is regathered into its dwelling place; when night begins its watches – as He opens His storehouse and spreads darkness over the earth – and when it cycles back, withdrawing before the light;

When the luminaries show forth from their holy habitation, and when they are regathered into their glorious abode (1QS 9:26–10:3).

The hymn describes a system of twice daily communal prayer, once in the morning and once in the evening (cf. 1QH 20:4–7; 1QM 14:12–14; Falk 2000, 115–18; Schuller 2001, 133–34). Special additional prayers were also recited on the Sabbath and festivals (1QS 10:3–8), as well as on annual communal ceremonies (1QSb, 4Q286–290). Elsewhere, the Rule of the Community seems to indicate that prayer was carried out in communal fashion (1QS 6:3: “together they shall bless”). The Damascus Document refers to a “house of prostration,” perhaps the location where prayer was offered (Steudel 1993a; Falk 1998, 242–46). The recitation of some of the Qumran prayers may have coincided with the times for the offering of specific sacrifices in the Temple (4Q409; Qimron 1990), a prominent feature of prayer in later rabbinic Judaism. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide the earliest evidence for institutionalized communal prayer in Judaism, a feature that seems to have been relatively uncommon in Judaism prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE (Fleischer 1990; Reif 1993).

The Dead Sea Scrolls have yielded over 200 texts that were used in varying degrees by the community for liturgical purposes (see Schiffman 1987; Weinfeld 1992; Chazon, 1994, 1998; Nitzan 1994, 2003; Falk 1998, 1999; Schuller 2001). Some of these texts were composed by the Qumran community, while others were composed elsewhere and adopted by the community. Indeed, some of the prayers may have previously been recited alongside sacrifices in the Temple (Falk 2000; Nitzan 2003). The larger collection of prayer texts include: Daily Prayers (4Q503; Falk 1998), Festival Prayers (1Q34–34^{bis}, 4Q507–9; Falk 1998), Words of the Luminaries (4Q504–506; Chazon 1993), Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400–7; 11Q17; Newsom 1985), and other hymns with an undefined liturgical status (e.g., the Psalms Scroll (11Q5; Sanders 1965; Flint 1997); Non-Canonical Psalms (4Q380–381; Schuller 1986); Hodayot (1QH, 4Q427–432; Licht 1957; Holm-Nielsen 1960); and Songs of the Sage (4Q510–511; Nitzan

1994)). The collection of biblical verses (Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Num 15:37–41) identified in rabbinic tradition as the *Shema* seems to have also been recited as a prayer twice daily (1QS 10:10; cf. *m. Tam.* 5:1). Excavations at Qumran also discovered several phylacteries (*tefillin*) that likely played some role in the community's liturgical practice (Yadin 1969; Milik and de Vaux 1977).

In addition to prayer as an alternative to sacrifice, the Qumran community envisioned itself as a temple in exile, seeing its own members as fulfilling the same expiatory functions as the Temple in Jerusalem (Gärtner 1965; Dimant 1986). The Rule of the Community states that the sectarian community was established as “an eternal planting, a temple for Israel” (1QS 8:5). Another prominent sectarian document, the Florilegium (4Q174; Brooke 1985), states that God “commanded that a sanctuary of man (*miqdaš 'adam*) be built for him, that they might offer before him precepts of Torah” (4Q174 1:6–7) (Brooke 1985; Wise 1991). While the Temple in Jerusalem remained defiled, the community envisioned itself carrying out the functions of the priesthood and other rituals associated with the Temple.

RITUAL AND PURITY

The biblical system of purity laws concentrates on maintaining the ritual integrity of the Temple. As a “temple in exile” with a priestly identity, the Qumran community extended the purity constraints normally applied only to the Temple to the Qumran settlement and its members (see Harrington 1993, 2004, 2006; García Martínez 1995; Regev 2000a, 2000b, 2003; Maier 2001; Broshi 2004). The Rule of the Community, the Damascus Document, and the Halakhic Letter (4QMMT; Qimron and Strugnell 1994; Kampen and Bernstein 1996) are important sources for sectarian purity regulations. In addition, several smaller manuscripts are devoted entirely to purity laws (4QTohorot A–C (4Q274–278); Baumgarten 1995a, 1995b, Milgrom 1995) and purification rites (4Q284, 4Q414, 4Q512; J. M. Baumgarten, 1992, 1999). The Temple Scroll (11Q19–20; Yadin 1983; Qimron 1996), although not composed by the Qumran community (Schiffman 1994a), espouses a closely related purity system that served an authoritative role in the community (Callaway 1985–1987; Schiffman 1989a; Milgrom 1990, 1993).

The Qumran community's system of ritual purity must be seen through two perspectives. The documents listed above contain numerous laws and regulations regarding purity and purification rites. Many of these laws, however, had little application outside of Jerusalem, the Temple and its cult and therefore represented an ideal portrait created by the community, which was never actually applied. At the same time, several aspects of purity law were applied in full by the community. In what follows, we shall briefly discuss some aspects relating to the larger conception of purity at Qumran and then examine evidence for the full application of purity laws in the life of the community.

Scholars have noted that the purity system is more stringent at Qumran than in contemporaneous and later Jewish tradition, particularly rabbinic Judaism (Baumgarten 1980; Harrington 1993). While the rabbis made every effort to minimize the burden of biblical purity laws, the Qumran community found every possible way to apply them in their totality as well as to expand them. This distinction can be seen in the various disputes between the Qumran community and its opponents in Jerusalem as articulated in the Halakhic Letter (4QMMT). This letter, likely written by early members of the community to their former priestly colleagues in Jerusalem, outlines disagreements over several matters of Jewish law that led to the withdrawal of the community from Jerusalem. Purity laws are at the forefront of many of these disagreements. Let us discuss one example, that of *tebul yom* (lit. “immersion of the day”) (see Baumgarten 1980, 157–61; Schiffman 1994b; Solomon 1997):

Leviticus 22:6–7 mandates that any priest in a state of ritual impurity must undergo ritual immersion and then “as soon as the sun sets, he shall be clean.” A similar process is outlined for ritually impure lay people who wish to be restored to a state of purity (Lev. 11:39–40; Deut. 23:12). The Pharisees, followed by rabbinic law, posited that having immersed during the day (*tebul yom*), the individual was considered pure for all ritual purposes with the exception of partaking from the heave-offering and the sacrificial offerings (*m. Par.* 3:7; *m. Neg.* 14:3; *Sifra* ‘Emor 4:8). The Mishna (*m. Par.* 3:7), the 3rd century CE compendium of rabbinic law, states that the Pharisees actively defiled the high priest during the day when he has scheduled to administer the rite of the Red Heifer (the ashes of the slaughtered Red Heifer are sprinkled on individuals who have contracted impurity through contact with a corpse; see Numbers 19). Since the high priest was rendered ritually impure, he would be required to immerse on the same day. According to the Pharisees, the priest could then administer the Red Heifer rite since it did not require the additional level of purity generated by the arrival of sunset. The actions of the Pharisees are explained by the Mishna as an attempt to refute the claims of the Sadducees who believed that a defiled person who had immersed was not fully pure until sunset and thus the priest would have been unfit to administer the Red Heifer rite on the day that he was rendered ritually impure.

The position attributed to the Sadducees is fully articulated as the sectarian view in the Halakhic Letter: “and concerning the purity-regulation of the cow of the purification-offering (i.e., the red cow) . . . it is at sun[se]t that all these become pure” (4QMMT B 13–16). The insistence that sunset is a prerequisite for full purification is further emphasized elsewhere in the Halakhic Letter (4QMMT B 65–72) as well as throughout the Temple Scroll’s purity laws (11Q19 45:7–12; 49:19–21; 51:4–5).

The practical application of the community’s strict purity laws can be seen in the initiation process for prospective members of the community and the daily life of all community members. The Rule of the Community

describes a two-year probationary period for all novitiates (Avenmarie 1997). During the first year, the novitiate was forbidden to come into contact with the pure food of the community (1QS 6:15–17). After a year, the novitiate, if deemed worthy to continue as a member, may partake of the solid food although is not allowed access to any liquids, which were considered to be more susceptible to impurity (1QS 6:20–21) (Baumgarten 1995c). Only after two years may the novitiate fully participate in the communal meals (1QS 6:21–22). The purity of the community may have also been maintained through various constraints on marriage and sexual activity. The Halakhic Letter mandates that one may not marry certain individuals bearing heightened sources of impurity (4QMMT B 39–54). Indeed, members of the Qumran community may have practiced celibacy since women and sexual activity were considered major sources of impurity (Baumgarten 1990; Qimron 1992; see, however, Zias 2000).

Several Qumran texts are preserved that contain detailed instructions for ritual immersion, which restores individuals to a state of purity (4Q284; 4Q414; 4Q512; see J. M. Baumgarten, 1992, 1999). Impure individuals would launder their clothes, undergo ritual immersion, and wait for sunset (see above) before being considered pure once again. The purification texts indicate that immersion was often accompanied by fixed liturgical pronouncements such as blessings. Excavations at Qumran have uncovered several (9–10) sealed water instillations fed by the main aqueduct system. Similarities with contemporaneous *miqva'ot* (ritual baths) throughout the land of Israel suggest that these structures were likewise *miqva'ot* employed for ritual immersion (Pfann 1999, 349–50; Reich 2000; Magness 2002). Ritual immersion, however, was not regarded as an automatic source of purification. If impurity occurred as the result of sin, the individual must resolve to abandon all sinful ways in order for the immersion to be effective: “ceremonies of atonement cannot restore his innocence, neither cultic waters his purity . . . Through an upright and humble attitude his sin may be covered, and by humbling himself before God’s laws his flesh can be made clean” (1QS 3:4–9).

Religion in thought

GOD, DUALISM, AND PREDESTINATION

The Dead Sea Scrolls nowhere articulate a fully developed theology. Much of the conception of God found in the scrolls is adapted from biblical theology, and was shared by the majority of Second Temple Judaism (Cook 2001). Like all other segments of Second Temple Judaism, Scripture was central and provided an authoritative compass for sectarian life and thought. Moreover, the Qumran community envisioned itself as the embodiment of ancient Israel (Collins 2001). Accordingly, many of the constituent elements of the religious system of the Qumran community are in fact scriptural

modes of thought and practice. The Dead Sea Scrolls, however, espouse several theological aspects that are found neither in the Hebrew Bible nor in most other segments of Second Temple Judaism.

The standard biblical images of God are ubiquitous in the scrolls (Ringgren 1995, 47–67; Rösel and Gleßmer 2000; Cook 2003). The portrait of God as the omniscient and omnipotent creator is found throughout the Qumran corpus (1QM 10:8–9; 1QH 17:16–17; 18:8–11; 11QPs^a 26). God has long been active in history and continues to do so in the present (CD; 1QM 10:12–15). God is a warrior, who will fight Israel's battles (1QM 1:8–10; 11:1–3, 9–10; cf. Exod. 15:3). Nothing happens without the divine will (1QH 9:19–20; 1QS 11:11). God is the ultimate source of all heavenly and worldly knowledge (1QH 6:12–14; 12:27–28; 15:26–27).

Several Qumran texts present a very distinct theology, which is either not present in the Hebrew Bible or less emphasized than in the Dead Sea Scrolls. For example, the Hebrew Bible often speaks about the presence of angels and additional divine agents (Rofé 1979). In the more developed worldview of the Qumran community, the heavens were full of numerous angels as well as exalted humans, who often act as God agents in the human world (Smith 1990; Davidson 1992; Abegg 1997; Collins 2000b; Rösel and Gleßmer 2000, 317–18).

The most unique theological concepts found at Qumran are dualism and predestination (Bergmeier 1980). The Hebrew Bible attributes the creation of all worldly elements, both good and evil, to God. The idea that evil emanates from God was unsettling to many Jews in the Second Temple period, including the Qumran community. As such, the community posited a dualistic world where good and evil forces maintain independent control over their respective domains in the world (Huppenbauer 1959; Osten-Sacken 1969; Duhaime 1987, 1988, 2000a; Ringgren 1995, 68–80; Frey 1997; Dimant 1998). Unlike pure dualism where good and evil are absolutely independent powers, Qumran dualism attributes the creation of both elements to God, who granted them their power at the time of creation. The dualistic perspective of the community is fully articulated in the *Treatise on the Two Spirits*, an originally independent composition now found in the *Rule of the Community* (1QS 3:13–4:26; Licht 1965; Charlesworth 1990; Tigchelaar 2004). The passage opens with the claim that God “has appointed for it (i.e., mankind) two spirits in which to walk until the time of his visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood” (1QS 3:17–19) and continues by describing the nature of good and evil in the world.

Each of the spirits possesses a human lot of followers, who are assigned to one of these lots prior to their birth. The spirits of evil are led by numerous demonic forces, identified in various texts as Melki-reša, Belial and Mastema (Kobelski 1981). Aspects of good and evil are found in every human, who is constantly struggling with each of these forces. The Qumran community identified itself as the Sons of Light (i.e., good), while its enemies were the Sons of Darkness (i.e., evil). All prospective members were

examined to ensure that they too were created among the lot of good (see 4Q186; Alexander 1996).

The struggling forces of good and evil remain potent throughout the course of world history, although evil constantly emerges as the more powerful force. The end of days, however, will witness God's ultimate destruction of all forces of evil, including the demonic leaders and their human followers. This will take place within the context of the eschatological battle described in the War Scroll (see below). After the defeat of evil, the spirit of good will reign supreme. God will then expunge from all humans any traces of evil and all will be instructed in the good spirit. Humans will live in a world of peace, purification, and eternal life together with the angels (Duhaime 2000a, 218).

The view that certain individuals are assigned to the lot of evil at the time of their creation stands behind the other unique element of Qumran theology: predestination (Marx 1967; Merrill 1975; Newsom 1992; Duhaime 2000b, 194–98; Broshi 2001). The belief in an omniscient God who knows the course of future events is already present in the Hebrew Bible (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 16:9; cf. Ben Sira 23:20; see Clines 1998). In this model, however, humans maintain a sense of free-will to choose their own path. Qumran theology developed this concept further by positing that the entire course of world history and individual action has been predetermined by God, and is impervious to change by human action (1QS 3:15–17; 1QH 9:7–34; 20:8–11; CD 2:7–10). 4Q180 (Peshar on the Periods) has been identified by D. Dimant as a description of the divinely preordained periods of history (1979). The belief that history has already been predetermined is likewise found in apocalyptic texts preserved at Qumran (1 Enoch and Jubilees), which posit the existence of ancient heavenly tablets upon which is inscribed the entire recorded history of humanity (Paul 1974; Najman 2004, 62–63). Scholars working with the recently published wisdom texts from Qumran (e.g., 1Q/4QInstruction; Strugnell and Harrington 1999) have identified in these texts the belief in a preexistent hidden order of the world (the *raz nihyeh*; see Lange 1995; Harrington 1996).

Notwithstanding the belief that every human action is preordained by God, the Dead Sea Scrolls identify several instances where humans seemingly possess free-will. For example, conversion to the community is conceptualized as an act of free-will (1QS 5:1). Likewise, the Qumran corpus has a fully developed system of repentance (Nitzan 1999). At the same time, it was assumed that if one did convert from the Sons of Darkness to the Sons of Light or atone for personal sins, then this set of experiences was already preordained by God.

ESCHATOLOGY, MESSIANISM, AND RESURRECTION

Eschatology and messianism are among the most written upon subjects in Qumran scholarship (van der Woude 1957; Schiffman 1992; VanderKam

1994; Puech 1994, 1997; Abegg 1995; Collins 1995a, 1995b, 1997a, 2000c; Evans and Flint 1997; Nitzan 1997; Charlesworth, Lichtenberger, and Oegema 1998; Zimmermann 1998; Knibb 1999; Duhaime 2000c; Evans 2000; Beall 2001; Xeravits 2003; Vermes 2003; see bibliography in Abegg, Evans, and Oegema 1998). The Qumran community believed that they were living in the end of days, the final phase of history (Steudel 1993b). The Damascus Document contains a precise calculation for the final end of days – 40 years after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness (CD 20:14). Earlier, the Damascus Document states that the community was formed 390 years after the Babylonian exile (586 BCE) and was 20 years without the Teacher of Righteousness (CD 1:9–10). If the Teacher led the community for approximately 40 years (Collins 1997a, 83), then the total period from the exile until the eschaton would be 490 years, a figure familiar from eschatological predictions in Daniel (Daniel 9). Although the community's precise date for the exile is not certain, most understandings of the community's eschatological calculations locate their prediction of the eschaton sometime in the 1st century BCE (Steudel 1993b; Collins 1997a, 82–85; Beall 2001, 132–35).

The community's eschatological speculations are further articulated in the commentaries on prophetic books known as Pesharim (sg. Peshar; Horgan 1979; Lim 2002; Berrin 2005). Peshar exegesis assumes that the ancient words of the biblical prophets refer not to their own times, but rather contain hidden allusions to the origins, development, and eschatological history of the Qumran community. These hidden messages are identified through the inspired exegesis of the community's leaders, in particular the Teacher of Righteousness. This model is fully articulated in Peshar Habakkuk (1QpHab; Elliger 1953; Nitzan 1986), the best preserved of the Pesharim. The ancient prophets are conceptualized as pronouncing oracles concerning “all that is going to come” (1QpHab 2:9–10). Previously in this passage, the same expression was employed to refer to events in the end of days (1QpHab 2:7). The end of days envisioned in this passage is not some distant eschatological age. Rather, the sect believed that they themselves were living in the end of days and as such the expression denotes the present time. Thus, the ancient prophetic pronouncements refer neither to their own time nor the near future; rather, they relate to the distant future, the period in which the sectarian community now lives. Peshar Habakkuk later claims that the hidden future meaning of the prophecy was not even known to the prophet: “Then God told Habakkuk to write down what is going to happen [to] the generation to come; but when that period would be complete[,] He did not make known to him (1QpHab 7:1:2). The “true” meaning of the ancient prophetic pronouncements is known only to the Teacher of Righteousness, identified as “the priest in whose [heart] God has put [the abil]ity to explain all the words of his servants the prophets” (1QpHab 2:8–9).

Throughout the Peshar commentaries, the words of the prophets are applied to the present reality of the Qumran community and the ancient prophetic word is understood as the key to unlocking the mysteries of the present eschatological age. For example, the community found an explanation for their unrealized eschatology in the words of the prophet Habakkuk. As noted above, the community predicted that the 1st century BCE would witness the onset of the final phase of the end of days. Yet, no such event occurred and the community continued to live in anticipation of the final end of days. In doing so, they explained the present circumstances by interpreting Habakkuk 2:3, “for a prophecy testifies of a specific period; it speaks of that time and does not deceive,” to mean that “the Last Days will be long, much longer than the prophets had said; for God’s mysteries are truly mysterious” (1QpHab 7:7–8). The remainder of the biblical passage, “it is tarries, be patient, it will surely come true and not be delayed,” is deciphered as an allusion to “those loyal ones, obedient to the Law, who[se] hands will not cease from loyal service even when the Last Days seems long to them, for all the times fixed by God will come about in due course as He ordained that they should by his inscrutable insight” (1QpHab 7:10–14).

The community therefore lived in constant anticipation of the final end of days and prepared themselves for the events associated with the eschaton. The Rule of the Congregation (1QS_a; Schiffman 1989b) describes how the community would be reconstituted for the unfolding drama of the final end of days. The text envisions an eschatological community of the “men of the covenant,” presided over by an assembly of absolutely pure individuals (Schiffman 1985). One of the primary tasks of this assembly will be to determine the appropriate time to go to war.

The war identified in the Rule of the Congregation is the eschatological battle described at length in the War Scroll (1QM, 4Q491–497; van der Ploeg 1959; Carmignac 1958; Jongeling 1962; Yadin 1962; Duhaime 2004) and known from elsewhere in the community’s literature (1QS 10:19; 1QH 11:35; 4QpIsa^a). The battle would inaugurate the final period of the end of days and result in the complete excision of all forces of the Sons of Darkness and the armies of Belial. This includes both foreign enemies (e.g., Kittim = Greeks or Romans; Eshel 2001) and Jews outside of the community (“violators of the covenant”), who have not become members of the Sons of Light (cf. 4Q174 4:1–4). The armies of the Sons of Light will be led in battle by the angels and God, whose military power guarantees victory (see above). The victory will initiate a period of peace, righteousness, and knowledge, presided over by Michael and the angels (1QM 17:6–8). A related text, 11QMelchizedek (11Q13; van der Woude 1965; Milik 1972, 96–109; Horton 1976; Kobelski 1981, 3–23; Puech 1987) depicts a similar eschatological battle against Belial and his armies. This text introduces Melchizedek (cf. Gen. 14:18–20; Psalm 110) as a heavenly being (*elohim*) who will administer justice in the end of days and vanquish the armies of

Belial in a battle that will take place at the end of the tenth jubilee (490 years). With the final destruction of Belial, Melchizedek's victory ushers in a period of peace and salvation uniquely directed at the righteous.

In the aftermath of the annihilation of Belial and the Sons of Darkness, the community will be led by two messianic figures. Thus, the Rule of the Congregation describes a messianic banquet that will be administered by the priestly messiah (Messiah of Aaron), who is accompanied by a royal messiah (Messiah of Israel) (Schiffman 1989b, 53–56). These two messianic figures are well known from other Qumran literature (Kuhn 1957; VanderKam 1994; Collins 1995a). The Rule of the Community refers to the future arrival of the “messiahs of Aaron and Israel” (1QS 9:11). 4QTestimonia (4Q175; see Cross 2002) contains a set of four scriptural passages, two of which (Num. 24:15–17; Deut. 33:8–11) seem to envisage the future arrival of a royal and priestly messiah, appearing in the same order as the Rule of the Community (see Xeravits 2003, 58). In both these texts, the messiahs are preceded by an eschatological prophet (Jassen 2006). The Florilegium (4Q174) refers to a “Branch of David” who appears together with the “Interpreter of the Law,” often identified as the priestly messiah (VanderKam 1994, 227–28). Other texts also identify the messiah as Davidic (e.g., 1QSb 5:20–29; 4QpIsa^a 8–10 17–21; 4Q252 5:1–5; 4Q285; VanderKam 1994, 212–19; Beall 2001, 138–40), although without any messianic counterpart. Messianic references in the Damascus Document are more problematic since the text seems to refer to a single “messiah of Aaron and Israel” (CD 12:23–13:1; 14:18–19; 19:10–11; 20:1), although the word “messiah” may be used here in a distributive sense (Talmon 1992, 104–5; VanderKam 1994, 229–31). More recently, however, M. Abegg (1995) has argued for the priority of the singular reading in the Damascus Document and suggested that the evidence from the other texts likewise supports the possibility of the expectation of one singular messiah who would combine both priestly and royal functions.

Unfortunately, while the Qumran texts contain numerous messianic references, the messianic outlook of the community is never outlined in full. Presumably, the Messiah of Israel was expected to administer all political functions, such as defeating any additional enemies of Israel and establishing the political reign of the community. Although the messiahs are conspicuously absent from the description of the eschatological battles in the War Scroll and 11QMelchizedek, the Davidic messiah does seem to have been entrusted with some military responsibilities (see 4QpIsa^a; 4Q285; Evans 2000, 143–46). The Messiah of Aaron would carry out all the sacerdotal functions, which would include instruction in the law and the resumption of the Temple worship in accordance with the community's cultic model (see below). The preeminence of the priestly messiah at the messianic banquet is usually understood as indicative of the priestly messiah's supremacy over the royal messiah. Scholars have noted that the community's messianic speculation likely changed over time (Starcky 1963; Stegemann

1996; Charlesworth 1998). In addition, the community preserved texts composed outside of the community that espouse a sometime different messianic outlook (e.g., 4Q521; see Puech 1992; Collins 1994).

Scholars have long debated whether the community believed that the messianic age would be accompanied by bodily resurrection. Early Qumran scholarship suggested that the community maintained that the Teacher of Righteousness would be resurrected (see Knibb 1990; Collins 1995a, 102–12). Moreover, E. Puech has argued that the Qumran writings attest to a widespread belief in bodily resurrection (1993; 1994; 1997). The belief in resurrection, found in Daniel (12:2; see Collins 1993, 394–98) and other Second Temple texts (Nickelsburg 1972; Cavallin 1974), however, does not seem to be expressed explicitly in any document composed by the Qumran community (see Collins 1997b, 111–28). The Rule of the Community speaks of “eternal life” for the Sons of Light (1QS 4:6–8), although this seems to refer to communion with the angels in the end of days (Collins 1997a, 88). The Hodayot twice refer to the raising up of the hymnist from death (1QH 11:19–23; 19:10–14), although these passages likely reflect only the symbolic language of restoration. Several non-sectarian texts preserved in the Qumran library, however, do posit a belief in bodily resurrection (e.g., Enoch, 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521 2), Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 2 + 3, 4Q386 1 i); Dimant 2000b; Hobbins 2001). The fact that these texts were found at Qumran suggests that their views on resurrection were at the very least not objectionable to the Qumran community, although they seem to have had minimal influence.

The aftermath of the eschatological battle would also witness the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem to the community and the resumption of sacrifice according to the community’s standards (Yadin 1962, 223–28). Several texts contained within the Qumran library speculate on the nature of the restored Temple. The Temple Scroll contains descriptions of two future temples. The first temple, expected to be built by humans and described with incredibly large proportions, would stand until the onset of the messianic age (Maier 1989; Schiffman 1993). The New Jerusalem texts (1Q32, 2Q24, 4Q554–555, 5Q15, 11Q18; Chyutin 1997; DiTommaso 2005), another non-sectarian writing held in high esteem by the community, similarly envisions a reconstructed Jerusalem of massive proportions (Broshi 1995).

With the arrival of the messianic era, however, the Temple Scroll envisions God as constructing a second temple that would replace the earlier man-made temple: “And I will consecrate my [te]mple by my glory, (the temple) on which I will settle my glory, until the day of blessing (or “creation”; see Qimron 1996, 44) on which I will create my temple and establish it for myself for all times, according to the covenant which I have made with Jacob at Bethel” (11Q19 29:8–10). The notion that God would build a temple in the messianic era is similarly expressed in the Florilegium (4Q174; Schwartz 1979; Brooke 1985, 178–93). As noted above, the sacrificial cult

in the eschatological temple would be carried out according to its sectarian understanding. The priestly messiah would likely serve as the primary cultic leader at this time. The community's insistence that the eschatological age would usher in their return to preeminence in the Temple served as the primary motivation for the continued study of the laws of sacrifice at Qumran (e.g., the Damascus Document) and the cultivation of additional writings that espoused a similar understanding of the laws of the Temple and sacrifice (e.g., the Temple Scroll).

Conclusion

Half a century of Qumran research has produced a broad portrait of religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many consensuses have emerged, although some issues remain disputed. The next half century of scholarship will undoubtedly yield even greater discussion of these disputed issues and will likely force scholars to rethink many long held assumptions about religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran community is a vast area of research, of which we have only begun to explore here. Like the ancient Jewish mystic who was provided with only the "heads of the chapters" (*raše perakim*; *b. Hag.* 13a), the reader is here presented with the major texts and issues and the general currents in scholarly research.

Note

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