



Archaeological Documents, Especially those of Qumran

Essay by Phil Smith

Archaeological Documents, Especially those of Qumran

New Testament archaeology also includes written documents from public and private inscriptions collected from stone, papyrus animal skins or other such materials. This article looks at archaeology in terms of the various documents and manuscripts for the New Testament and Old Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The information in this article mostly comes from an article by the same name authored by Dr Johnson C. Phillips, Biblical Archaeology and Apologetics. Phillips has written several articles in regards to this. All of these documents are involved in defending the Bible. There are over 5,800 Ancient Greek New Testaments alone that are available to study. There are also Papyrus documents that have been discovered from different ages in Egyptian history. There is a stone inscription from the Roman emperor, dictating that all graves and tombs remain undisturbed. Another inscription was inscribed on limestone at Delphi in Central Greece that helps provide a fixed point for the chronology of Paul's career. There are also coins that sometimes throw light on points of New Testament history. The Dead Sea Scrolls have also provided literature of a Jewish community that flourished between 100 BC and 68 AD. They have also provided a complete Old Testament Bible that dates back to 200 BC. Interestingly, the study of sacred sites has become a separate branch of archaeology. Biblical archaeology, for most people to whom the expression means anything, is almost exclusively associated with the Old Testament. Argumentatively that is where my interest mostly are. I love studying the Old Testament, it's languages, histories and archaeology that is associated with it. And these archaeological discoveries relating to the Old Testament have renewed public imagination to an increased degree even in the New Testament field. Scrolls have received much more public attention than is usually given to written documents from the Near East of Graeco-Roman days, but that has been stimulated by the widely publicized suggestion that their evidence.

So these documents are also made up of inscriptions on stone and other material; there is also papyri recovered from the sand of Egypt recording literary texts or housewives' shopping lists; they may be private notes scratched on fragments of unglazed pottery; they may be legends on coins preserving information about some otherwise forgotten ruler or getting some point of official propaganda across to the people who used them. Or they may represent a Christian church's collection of sacred Scriptures, like the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri; they may be all that is left of the library of an ancient religious community, like the scrolls from Qumran or the Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi. Again, if New Testament archaeology cannot boast of the

excavation of long-buried cities, it has enabled the identification of a large number of sites mentioned by the apostles and evangelists.

Phillips says that papyrus manuscripts has thrown the most light on the New Testament, especially those which contain the writing of ordinary people in their everyday vernacular. If you want to study New Testament manuscripts, there is a course by Daniel Wallace in Biblical Training.org showing the investigative history of these manuscripts. This course is a must for anyone interested in ancient New Testament manuscripts. The course is called Textual Criticism by Dr Daniel Wallace. Interestingly, this vernacular presents similarities to the Greek use in the New Testament. Although Scholars have recognized the differences, they haven't been able to account for them. An interesting aspect of Greek, Richard Rothe in 1863 referred to New Testament Greek as "a language of the Holy Spirit," which might infer that it's divinely produced for the purpose of recording the Christian revelation. Of course this thinking isn't new and most Christians would understand. But another person Joseph Barber Lightfoot, lecturing in Cambridge, said that if we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other, without any thought of being literary, this would help us understand the New Testament better." However, when the vernacular papyrus Greek was discovered later, the language wasn't very different from the language of the common people. There was at first a natural tendency to go too far in assuming that the language of the New Testament could be entirely explained in terms of the new discoveries. One must remember that the study of the New Testament manuscripts is more than studying the Greek that it was written in but it is also the study of the Aramaic and its culture and the Aramaicisms within the Gospels. The New Testament idiom is indeed vernacular when it deals with everyday affairs, although much of it (as we might expect) has a Semitic flavour not found in the Egyptian papyri. Great excitement was aroused towards the end of last century by the discovery of two papyrus fragments at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, containing a number of isolated sayings of Jesus, each introduced by the words, "Jesus said." Some of these were similar to sayings of Jesus preserved in our Gospels; others had no known parallels. One of the most striking was the frequently quoted one: "Jesus said: Wherever there are two, they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." Jesus in St. John's Gospel. Several of these are clearly the product of Gnostic reconstruction of the original Christian message; others are the fruitage of pious but undisciplined imagination. These don't necessarily help in translation but only indicate how the New Testament was understood in some very significant and influential circles in the early church. The fragments of the "unknown

Gospel” (Egerton Papyrus 2), dated on palaeographical grounds around A.D. 150, appear actually to have belonged to a manual designed to teach people the Gospel stories.

Wallace tells us that the oldest known fragment of any part of the New Testament is a scrap from a codex of St. John’s Gospel, to be dated in the first half of the second century, and therefore probably less than fifty years later than the actual composition of that Gospel. Archaeology provides us with the material for tracing the text of the New Testament farther back and establishing it on a firmer basis, it renders an inestimable service to Biblical studies. Thus, the statement in Luke 2:3, that in pursuance of the imperial census-decree which preceded our Lord’s birth, “all went to be enrolled, each to his own city,” is illustrated by a papyrus in the British Museum, recording an edict of A.D. 104 in which the Roman prefect of Egypt gives notice: “The enrolment by household being at hand, it is necessary to notify all who for any cause whatsoever are outside their own administrative districts that they must return to their own homes, in order both to carry out the customary procedure of enrolment and to continue steadfastly in the agriculture which belongs to them.” the British Museum. Wallace provides us with information on many of these ancient fragments such as P52, an important papyrus because it is the earliest known Greek New Testament copy of any size of any passage of the New Testament. The Chester Beady papyrus is housed mostly in Dublin although there is one leaf in Vienna and thirty leaves at the University of Michigan. It has the earliest copy of Paul’s letters, Mark’s Gospel and Revelation. There are also a number of very Old Testament manuscripts. Then, there is the Martin Boggner Papyri, which are manuscripts that are housed for the most part in Geneva, Switzerland in a small village on the edge of Lake Geneva; however there have been some shifts in the last few years with these. The Most famous, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus are probably the two most important New Testament manuscripts. Both are from the 4th century and both contain the entire Bible. We have a grand total of four early manuscripts that almost surely contain the entire Bible originally. They are all from the 4th or 5th century; we will spend some time on all four of these. The other two include the Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Bezae; Codex Alexandrinus is in the British Library and Codex Bezae, also known as Codex C is in the *Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*. These are 5th century manuscripts, which are, again, very important. Then the most famous manuscript of the New Testament is Codex Bezae, named after Thera Bezae, not because Bezae was famous but because his manuscript was famous. In fact, he gave it to the University of Cambridge with a letter in 1581 saying, ‘this manuscript is famous and I figure that the Cambridge University would be the one place that would know how to handle it and would accept it well and appreciate it.

Philips tells us of one such inscription dating back to the first seven months of A.D. 52, and mentions Gallio as being proconsul of Achaia. We know from other sources that Gallio's proconsulship lasted only for a year, and since proconsuls entered on their term of office on July 1, the inference is that Gallio entered on his proconsulship on that date in A.D. 51. But Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia overlapped Paul's year and a half of ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:11 ff.), so that Claudius's inscription provides us with a fixed point for reconstructing the chronology of Paul's career. A fragmentary door-inscription in Greek from Corinth, belonging to this general period, appears to have read when complete "Synagogue of the Hebrews"; conceivably it belonged to the synagogue in which Paul "reasoned every sabbath" (Acts 18:4) after his arrival in that city, until his presence was no longer tolerated there and he moved to the house of Justus next door. In the course of excavations in Corinth in 1929, a pavement was uncovered which bore the inscription in Latin: "Erastus, procurator for public buildings, laid this pavement at his own expense." The pavement evidently existed in the first century A.D., and we wonder if it was laid by Paul's friend Erastus, city treasurer of Corinth, whom he mentions in Romans 16:23. Yet another Corinthian inscription refers to the "meat market" (Gk. *makellon*), mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 10:25. Luke's narrative of the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23 ff.) represents the ecclesia or civic assembly of that place as meeting in the theatre. That it did in fact meet there is shown by an inscription in Greek and Latin, found in the Ephesian theatre, which records that a Roman official, Vibius Salutaris, presented a silver image of Artemis ("Diana" of KJV and ASV) and other statues "to be set up in the theatre during a full session of the ecclesia." The city of Derbe was closely associated with Lystra in the narrative of Acts, but it was unknown until 1956. In that year Michael Ballance discovered a dedicatory inscription set up by the council and people of Derbe in A.D. 157.

The "Dead Sea Scrolls" found at Qumran have introduced us to the literature of a Jewish community which flourished between 100 B.C. and A.D. 68. These documents have provided a new background for New Testament study. The Johannine literature and the Epistle to the Hebrews in particular may be illuminated in important respects by this discovery. Priestly tells us of a this Jewish Sect that existed from 150 BC to 69 BC. Between 500 and 800 Scrolls or fragments were found in various caves belonging to the Qumran Community located in Qumran Wadi. The most important points about this find is that it gives us a complete set of Old Testament books, some a thousand years older than what was previous held. The books verify the correctness of the Scriptures we have today. The next important point is that they give us a look at life just before New Testament times. The articles also provide information on how the Qumran text relate to various other books. The author William Priestly starts out by provide us

with a history of the Community and information on the scrolls found in Qumran. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was made some time during the winter of 1946/47. Bedouins sold them to the Jordanian Department of Antiquities at approximately one pound per square centimetre. There were various problems concerning the actual search for the scrolls, one of them being the war in Palestine in 1948 that was the same year in which news of the Dead Sea Scrolls was broken. There is a shallow depression above known as el-buqei'a. This is cut by a river and the place where it comes down through the cliffs is known as Wadi Qumran. There is a plateau at the base of the cliffs and it is here that archaeologists found the remains of the buildings of the Qumran Community. When the ruins were excavated, identical pottery types to the ones found in the caves were discovered. Coins were also found which "correspond with the period the palaeographers were assigning the manuscripts". As more and more evidence was unearthed, it became clear that Qumran was, after all, the home of the community which had written the scrolls.

Very little is known of the Community except perhaps it was founded by the 'Teacher of Righteousness', and was built some time in the middle of the second century BCE. Several hundred coins show the occupation to be from 135 BCE til 68 BCE when the Romans came. Many have tried to associate this group with the Gnostics and Zoroastrians but to a certain extent they followed Old Testament doctrine and were completely Jewish. There are some similarities between them and the Essenes. The Essenes were celibates, whereas the Qumran community did admit women and married them. The Essenes spiritualised the sacrificial system contrasted to the Damascus Document. The Qumran Community decided to isolate themselves but the Essenes were more open. The Qumran community were not pacifists. The Qumran community like the Essenes were a Jewish sect. They condemned the Jewish religious leaders of their day, just as Jesus did and then they purposely exiled themselves. They interpreted the scripture differently through a believed special revelation and were devoted to the study of the Law and the Prophets.

There were documents written in both Phoenician, Hebrew and Aramaic script, and a small amount in Greek. In some scrolls, there were a large number of variants. variants" This included every book in the Hebrew Bible except Esther, some commentaries, apocryphal works and various other non-Biblical works, many of them previously unknown. There are two Isaiah scrolls, one of which contains all sixty-six chapters of Isaiah dating from 150 BCE. This scroll was made of sewn leather strips sewn approximately 24 feet long. There are places where mistakes in the copying had been erased or crossed out with omission noted in the margins. Some points differs from the Masoretic Text of Isaiah, but "by and large it is essentially the same.

The manuscript is approximately a thousand years older than the oldest manuscript available before 1947 and it isn't split into three parts like others are. The other scroll, more fragmentary, doesn't have any of the previously mentioned variants. They also gave serious thought to the study of the book of Daniel." The Qumran text of Daniel is very close to the 10th century CE Masoretic text. Comparisons between the Aramaic in Daniel and the Aramaic of the Genesis Apocryphon show that the language of Daniel is several centuries older. The same with the Psalms, they show an earlier date in Israel's history. Some finds, such as those pieces from the book of Leviticus, which are some of the oldest fragments of Biblical books that we have, agree almost entirely with the Masoretic Text of Leviticus, and support the authority of the MT. "Even when the Dead Sea fragments of Deuteronomy and Samuel which point to a different MS family from that which underlies our received Hebrew text do not indicate any differences in doctrine or teaching." The book of Micah can also be dated over two hundred years earlier than the birth of Christ which totally refutes claims that it was written after His birth. This find is one of the greatest manuscript discoveries of all time. No work dealing with the Bible generally can now be regarded with any seriousness if it fails to take into account the significance of the Qumran discoveries. In conclusion: Phillip Davies says, "...the story of the scrolls is even now not quite over. Numerous fragments remain to be sorted, identified and published though it is unlikely that they will provide us with any more surprises."

Within the Qumran Community, the masters were in charge of wealth and wages which were put at the disposal of the masters. A person could replace loss or fraud. They could use their wealth to help others and if a person was dismissed he still had his wealth. The economic system of Qumran was Corban. If wealth was put in a common treasury and dispensed from the sum total, he had thereby profited but had prevented parents from profiting. The community practiced Baptism. Matt. 15:2 and Mark 7:3 describes the washing of hands and washing of cups, pots and vessels. This purification is demanded in the Damascus Document and also mentioned in the Manual of Discipline: "He will not be purified by atonement offerings, and he will not be made clean with the water for impurity; he will not sanctify himself with seas and rivers or be made clean with any water for washing." Both Scribes and Essenes were self-baptizers. This differs from both the baptism of John and Christian baptism because these require a baptizer. The nature of evil also appears in the Qumran Community with a basic assumption that man is under the power of personal evil spirits and that this evil source is arranged in a hierarchy. The head of this is designated in the Gospels as Beelzebub, probably a word of Babylonian origin. The Scribal assumption of the nature of evil led to a condemnation of Jesus is also found in the Qumran community. The Damascus Document says "The priests are the captivity of Israel, who

went forth from the Land of Judah, and the Levites are those who joined them; and the sons of Zadok are the elect of Israel, those called by the name, who will abide at the end of days.” So the community was also known as the ‘Sons of Zadok. So we see that the Scribes had a doctrinal position on the question of good and evil. Their organization was denounced by Jesus in Mk. 12:38-40, Matt. 23: 1-39 and Lk. 20:45-47. This denunciation was due to the desire to be called “Master” (Rabbin) which was at the very heart of the community. Christ also denounces the Scribes for seeking chief seats (Mk. 12:38 and Luke 20:46) It is condemned as hypocrisy rather than bad manners. The matter of seating was of vital importance to the community. “The priests shall be seated first, and the elders second and all the rest of the people shall be seated each in his position.” The scribes were denounced for making long prayers and doing anything to make a proselyte. The denunciation against devious oaths was connected to its system proselytism. In Matthew 8:19 A Scribe offers to follow Jesus but he was warns that “foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head”. Was this in refer to the person's communal wealth?

One of the peculiarities of John’s Gospel is that the Scribes are not mentioned. John could have had sympathy for the Scribes as at the writing of the Gospel they could not have exited due to the destruction of Jerusalem and in general the Jewish nation. Based on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, the Scribes could have been a combined group including the Essenes and the Qumran community with each group having their own name and peculiar doctrines and government. But still the suggestion remains that the Essenes were known under different names and the Scribes might be one of the names along with the Qumran community. Another suggestion has it that these groups grew out of what is known as the ‘Hasidim’, or “the pious ones”. About sixty of these were murdered by Alcimus, who has been suggested as the “wicked priest”. An anonymous member of this group could have been the 'teacher of righteousness'.

The identification of “sacred sites” is an important and fascinating branch of New Testament archaeology. While we know the general locations of the places where Christ ventured, it’s very difficult to fix the scenes of those events within a certain radius. However, some have been acknowledge such as Gabbatha. The Pavement in John 9:13 has been identified with the court of the fortress of Antonia, a Roman pavement of nearly 3,000 square yards. The pool of Bethesda (John 5:2) lies in the northeast quarter of the old city where traces of it were discovered in the course of excavations near the Church of St. Anne in 1888. Jerusalem’s most important sacred site, the place where Christ was crucified and buried (John 19:41), cannot be located with any absolute certainty. Among other Palestinian sites mentioned in the Gospel

record none is more certain than Jacob's well, near Balatah (the ancient Shechem). The third-century synagogue at Capernaum is visible; it was possibly built on the same site as the synagogue where Jesus did the mighty works recorded in Mark 1:21 ff.

In regards to these discoveries, there's no question to the fact that archaeology has provided us with a background to New Testament studies. This is a first-century background, not a second century background where it just doesn't fit. To the New Testament writers, as to Christians of today, the heart of the message is the Son of God, incarnate in the Man Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Archaeology may illuminate the historical context in which he was manifested in flesh, but how could it confirm the claim that life and salvation are available as God's free gift to those who believe in him? In our gratitude for the aid which archaeology affords to Biblical studies, let us bear in mind its limitations, and not try to make it prove more than it can. Christianity is a historical revelation; archaeology can provide us with a knowledge background and foundation of that history.

As these documents represent the apologists that are involved in defending the New Testament. Much of the New Testament Greek has been described as having a flavour of the Holy Spirit. The Dead Sea Scrolls have provided more light on the New Testament especially with the Johannine literature and the Epistle to the Hebrews. The identification of sites where New Testament events happens has proven to be a new interest in archaeology for many people. And there are still sites yet to be investigated all over Israel and in Jerusalem itself. One person said that no matter where you stand there is a ruin beneath you. For me this presents a feeling of nostalgic. With me, it certain does as I have been to many of these places. Some of these places are clearly known while others are only a guess as to its location. Even though I believe this is an understatement, but I think that New Testament archaeology has done a lot to confirm New Testament records as already been said. However, what I find strange, very little of this information is talked about in church. This is really exciting stuff! This confirmation has already given me a feeling of much more trust in the scriptures. But I do realize that it is facts and figures mostly and that can be boring.

Over the years Scholars have begun to refer to the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah as the Qumran scroll. As it alone contains the whole book of Isaiah it will maintain its own identity under any name. But the oldest papyri dates from 515 B.C. and the best known are the Aramaic papyri (5th century) from Elephantine. The Nash Biblical papyrus is dated not later than first half of the 1st century. The script isn't very different from that of the Isaiah Scroll. The epigraphic material is provide evidence of the long history, wide dispersal, and the trends of the North Semitic script, while the papyri make it very clear that scripts closely resembling it were in

use long before Christian times. The second piece of evidence for the early date is the shape and size of the letter 'yodh'. When our Lord said in Matt. 5, 18, "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The reference to the 'jot' was then the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Epigraphical material shows us that jot in size formerly rivalled a number of its fellow letters. Now in Isaiah manuscript it is still often of line height, and as large as the letter "waw", which it closely resembles, so much so that it's hard to tell one from the other. This actually indicates a time prior to the New Testament era for the composition of our Scroll. The Uzziah plaque (37 B.C.) the small size 'yodh' was used.

The comparison between John's Gospel and the Dead Sea Scrolls came to light about this sect in the Dead Seas Scrolls. The reason for the comparison is the similar style and general approach of the sect to John's Gospel. The value assigned to the document was its existence at the time the Christian movement. The scrolls relate to John's Gospel alone. John is written in Greek with some Aramaic influence and John's style is his own. And there is nothing that indicates John borrowed his method of writing from the sectarians. There are eleven points of comparison: two spirits, sons of light and sons of darkness, truth and error, predestination, the eschatological struggle, brotherly love, living waters, festivals, messianic, ceremonial ordinances and eternal life.

The Dead Sea Habakkuk Scroll contains the text of the first two chapters of Habakkuk. The third chapter was considered to be a separate work by the Qumran community. Along with the two chapters the Qumran community added a commentary. Some key points: the commentary used a particular Hebrew word, 'pesher' or 'interpretation' throughout its message. The pesher of Habakkuk can only be given by divine revelation. The mystery here is given the name *rāz*, a load word from Iranian. This *rāz* and *pěšhar* also appeared in the Aramaic parts of Daniel. The *rāz* is divinely communicated to one party while the pesher is divinely communicated to another party. For the message to be understood the *rāz* and the pesher must be brought together. The Teacher of Righteousness plays an important part in the theology of the Qumran community. The commentators believed that God had at last revealed the pesher to someone else, to their teacher righteousness. So three basic principles of the Qumran Biblical exegesis: (a) God revealed the mystery of his purpose to his servants the prophets, but his revelation (especially with regard to the time when the prophecies would be fulfilled) could not be properly understood until its interpretation was revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness. (b) All the words of the prophets referred to the time of the end. (c) The time of the end is at hand.

The Qumran exegesis seems to be applied direction to the groups own history and experiences. They believe that they are the chosen ones as they alone have received a new revelation of God.

The historical setting of the book is during the reign of Jehoiakim (608-598 B.C.) who was guilty of oppression and violence. (Jeremiah 22:13-17). Habakkuk complains to God about the oppression and violence. God tells him that the Chaldeans are being raised up against the unrighteous rulers of Judah. But Habakkuk complains that the Chaldeans will be even worst. But god assures him that too will be dealt with. Righteous will be re-established but until then Habakkuk and others must be patient and trust God. The prophecy of Habakkuk is coherent and intelligible when interpreted thus. But, the Qumran community thought that all prophecy were given in code and according to the Teacher of Righteousness, prophecies only referred to the immediately days to follow. Coherence and intelligibility would only come from the context not in the light of the prophets' own times.

The commentary clearly shows that the Wicked Priest is the Teacher's enemy. He seems to have been a man of high eminence and authority in the Jewish nation. This Wicked Priest was very hostile toward the Teacher of Righteousness at one time. This was on the occasion referred to above, when he invaded the meeting-place of the Teacher and his followers on the Day of Atonement and polluted the purity of their gathering. Presumably the Teacher and his companions were observing the sacred day in accordance with their own calendar (probably identical, or almost identical; with the calendar of Jubilees). The Wicked Priest could possibly have been one of the successive priests who ruled in Israel during the centuries preceding the second temple. The author of the article thinks that it could be Alexander Jannaeus, who became king and high priest of the Jews in 103 B.C., and held the dual office until his death in 76 B.C. But there are others who could easily fit the description.

There is still much speculation as to the identification of the Qumran community and the references proposed in the commentary. They were obviously a Zealot group. Josephus' account of the killing of a former high priest could fit the commentary And if in fact Ananias was the father of the Wicked Priest, and had been assassinated by the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers, then the Wicked Priest had some excuse for pursuing after the Teacher of Righteousness. According to the author the Teacher could have been a priest.

More evidence confirms that the Dead Sea Scrolls were placed in the caves shortly before AD 70. The Habakkuk Commentary was the first book published and related to the work of Solomon Schechter in 1910, under the title, Fragments of a Zadokite Work. Both products were the work of the Qumran community. The Zadokite Work was from two overlapping manuscripts found in Cairo, Genizah which like the Red Sea Scrolls believed to be pre-Christian.

And like the Habakkuk Commentary, the Teacher of Righteousness was a prominent figure. (Now in regards to the Teacher of Righteousness, Gaster holds that it really means 'the man who expounds the Law correctly'.) As to the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, they seem to have been expected about forty years after the community started. There is also a reference to someone called the Star in the Zadokite Work who supposedly led a group to Damascus. And we also find a reference to the Book of Hagu that was associated with the Zadokite Work. According to this book, the group seemed to be a more military type of community like the Hasidim described in I Maccabees while the Manual suggests they were more like the Essenes. The author goes to great length here to argue that the Kittim could not be the Romans but this goes against another article in this series. The apocalyptic war seems to have arisen out of a historical situation, more associated with the Greek or Macedonian kingdoms. Other books: I Enoch, Jubilees, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, some sections of the Sibylline Oracles, and the Psalms of Solomon are examined here:

Charles believes that the period of I Enoch is close to Alexander Jannaeus. Here, we also have the coming world judgement, then the kingdom of God with the centre in Jerusalem with the Temple where the Messiah reigns as the head of the kingdom. This is similar to what is found in the book of Daniel. I Enoch mentions the Apocalypse of Weeks - a history which is divided into periods, the seventh is marked by apostasy, the eighth is marked by righteousness, the ninth is marked by the destruction of the wicked, and the tenth is marked by eternal bliss

This Book of Jubilees is commonly dated in the second century B.C. Amongst the practices in this book, emphasis is given to keeping the Sabbath and against idolatry, both were done away with by the Seleucid authorities in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Seleucid authorities tried to Hellenize the Jews along with stopping them from circumcising on pain of death. The book also deals with issues of calendars. According to the author it must have been written before the Zadokite Work. There was no reference of resurrection from the dead in the Book of Jubilees.

A recent study by a Dutch scholar has argued for a post-Christian date for the book entitled, Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs. Charles says the date should be between 109 and 107 BC while Pfeiffer assigns the date to be between 140 and 110 BC. The background of the Testaments pointed toward the Hasmonean house, a priestly family, though not of the true high priestly line. The author may have looked up to the achievements of the Hasmonean.

Scroll of Benedictions - The blessing of the Prince and the High Priest is found in this book; again we have the idea of two Messiahs. The Testaments personalizes Beliar the embodiment of evil. This word comes from Belial in the Old Testament. He is the lord of

darkness, standing against God. Again we have been reminded of the war of the sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. The Testaments develops the idea of resurrection as found in the Book of Daniel.

Jewish Sibylline Oracles - This book is assigned to the latter part of the second century BC. There is a prediction here that peace will be established and the Jews will enjoy prosperity and another prediction says that when Rome rules Egypt, a holy prince will come to wield the sceptre all over the world.

Psalms of Solomon - Dated around 50 BC, one of these is messianic in character. Another describes the coming messianic age saying, 'Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David.' This Messiah will reign over Israel allowing no one to enter the land. He will bring an end to unrighteous rulers and deliver Jerusalem from Gentile oppressors.

The Battle Scroll -opens with a reference to the attack of the Sons of Light on the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines. Also in I Macc. V we are told of attacks made by Judas on the Edomites, on Transjordan, and on the Philistines.

For the Aadochie Work and the positioning of the dates of the Scrolls by the author, Charles says that the Zadokite Work expresses the hope of a Messiah from the family of Herod and Mariamne but this, of course, is an improbable hypothesis which has been already rejected. The Battle Scroll describes the conquered nations where the Kittim are present and apparently the whole war is to occupy forty years. The Zadokite Work says that the period of forty years from the death of the Teacher of Righteousness to the messianic age was a period of tribulation and conflict. It seems here that the work of the Teacher of Righteousness must be in the second century. Some of the second century works deals with the idea of a resurrection according to Daniel. On the other hand, the Psalms of Solomon doesn't mention a priestly Messiah superior to the Davidic Messiah. And according to the author if the Teacher of Righteousness belonged to the first century B.C., and figured in open conflict with Jannaeus or with Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, and if he founded and led the sect of the Scrolls in that age, the ideas of the sect should have been known to the author of the Psalms of Solomon but this isn't clear. Again, it seems that the ideas of the Scrolls have closer links with second-century writings than with first-century writings. We have been given some indications of a common background with the book of Jubilees, and none of these things would come with equal relevance from a background of the first century B.C. . Alexander Jannaeus and Hyrcanus and Aristobulus don't seem to have been members of the sect and there is no evidence that they promoted idolatry, or opposed the keeping of the Sabbath, or enforced a new calendar. In the Habakkuk Commentary the House of Absalom is condemned because it gave no help to the Teacher of Righteousness against the

Wicked Priest. The book of Daniel gives us evidence of the expectation in the second century B.C. that the kingdom of God was about to be established, and the heroes of the Maccabean struggle were sustained in their conflict by this hope. So it appears there is a case for positioning the Teacher of Righteousness in the early part of the second century B.C. From these above approaches, the setting sure is more relevant in regards to their ideas and interests, especially with the historical situation the group found themselves living in. This would also help explain other second-century apocalyptic and messianic hopes of the time. Moreover, the designation of the sect as the Sons of Zadok would find a natural explanation. Now the author says that an earlier positioning in dates would give more credit to the Greeks or Macedonians than it is to the Romans. It's obvious that this Antiochus Epiphanes who tried to Hellenize the Jews was really a tyrant because of the thing he did. The Nahum Commentary mentioned the Lion of Wrath, a person who hung men alive, and this refers to crucifixions, which again provides evidence to the first century BC. Then the crucified martyrs would be members of the sect and kindred groups who were opposed to Antiochus.

Matthew Black warns against exaggerating the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Christian doctrine as this may give a false picture of their doctrines as well as their dates. He suggests that some of the scrolls are contemporary to the New Testament writings whereas other scrolls are of an earlier time. According to the author the Essenes group may have held the fort at Qumran at the outbreak of the First Revolt and were the last custodians of the scrolls. The author will deal with three main aspects of Qumran doctrine and the New Testament, the doctrine of the priestly Messiah, the 'sacerdotal messianism', the doctrine of the Atonement, and the doctrine of the Last Things.

As already mentioned the Qumran sect believed in two Messiahs, a priestly Messiah and a secular leader or royal Messiah which is in line with the orthodox conception of traditional Judaism. There's also a third individual, the so-called Teacher of Righteousness who was the founder of the sect and some kind of teacher of the Law. There seems to be historical stages in the development the two Messiahs: (1) an eclipse of messianism in the Hellenistic era (c. 200-150 B.C.) (2) a reawakening of it in the time of the Hasmonean kings (c. 150-60 B.C.) and (3) the absorption of the messianic prerogatives by the future priestly Messiah at the beginning of the Roman period, (4) the renewal, possibly due to Pharisaic influences, of the traditional conception of a secular Messiah. The dual messiah-ship is a classic form for the sect with the dominant partner being priestly Messiah of Aaron and Israel. The historical roll of this distinctive messianic doctrine is presented in the sect's history and is tied to the sect's idea of atonement and eschatology. The Teacher of Righteousness presents himself as the possible High Priest, which is,

an Anointed One, or potentially an 'Anointed One', and, in this sense, a 'Messiah'. The Habakkuk Commentary of Habakkuk 11.4 says, 'The just shall live by faith', 'The explanation of this refers to all who practise the Law in the House of Judah whom God will deliver from the House of Judgement because of their works and their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness.' This Rightful Teacher (Teacher of Righteousness) in the Habakkuk and other scrolls was also the Young Pretender. Furthermore, this Rightful Teacher was a messianic pretender for high-priestly office provides the clue to the sect's sacerdotal messianism.

The idea of atonement within the Qumran sect is contested. It does mention some kind of atonement for the nation. The Manual of Discipline shows that the individual makes atonement for his own sins by renewed obedience to the Law. There is special mention of fifteen men, twelve laymen and three priests, who are perfect in all that is revealed from the whole Torah to act truly, rightly and justly and with a love of mercy; and to walk humbly with his neighbour; to maintain loyalty with integrity of purpose and a broken spirit; to expiate wrongdoing as men who uphold the righteous cause. These are true witnesses of judgement representing a living inner sanctuary in the Community almost like the church in the New Testament. The Messiah of the scrolls is a redeeming Messiah who will make atonement for their sins. Further evidence for this redemptive Messiah is found in the Hodayoth or Hymns of Thanksgiving. These hymns use the first person to probably refer to the Teacher of Righteousness. This idea of redemptive or atoning suffering is shown in passages of II Maccabees.

It is a fairly general assumption among scroll interpreters that the Qumran doctrine of the Last Things is that of the New Testament writings. This is a spiritual battle between the angelic hosts of the Lord and those of Belial. This battle will also be real and last war of the age. Christian doctrine in this respect is not dissimilar. The conflict between Jesus and the authorities was a real conflict. The last phase in the eschatology of the sect was concerned with the expectation of the Last Judgement and the coming of the Kingdom of God. The final section of the Hymns provides an eschatological prophecy of the end times, an Armageddon of immense proportions. The sanctuary of the sect will be the people of God ministering with the high-priestly Messiah ruling. The afterlife will consist of an angelic existence. This line of thinking is very similar to that of Luke. However, in light of this close relationship to the New Testament nothing is present in reference to the Resurrection. But the author thinks that it would be surprising if the sect had no resurrection doctrine, especially in view of the prominence of the Book of Daniel in their ideas about the Last Judgement.

The Qumran documents also include an abundance of material bearing on the Old Testament: Hebrew texts, Greek texts, Targums and Commentaries. There are over 200 copies of Old Testament books in the Hebrew (or Aramaic) among the more than 500 books discovered. There are also some Septuagint fragments of two manuscripts of Leviticus and one of Numbers identified and then fragments of the Septuagint text of Exodus and also of the Epistle of Jeremiah which are in the last chapter of Baruch in the Apocrypha. The Targumic material of Job was found in cave XI; fragments of a Leviticus Targum were found in Cave IV. The Genesis Apocryphon from Cave I certainly contains Targumic sections. M. Black says that it 'is almost certainly our oldest written Palestinian Pentateuch Targum'.

(4) One of the most important groups of writings found at Qumran consists of commentaries (pesharim) on various Old Testament books or parts of books.

The first documents found included a copy of the Book of Isaiah in Hebrew. Another consisted of two chapters of the Book of Habakkuk in Hebrew, accompanied by something like a verse-by-verse commentary, also in Hebrew. The third was a text of a code of rules or "manual of discipline" of the Qumran community. The fourth was an expanded Aramaic paraphrase of Chapters 5 to 15 of the Book of Genesis. This scroll was once known as the scroll of Lamech. It presents the text of Genesis with some additions. Some think it's more benefitting to call it the 'Scroll of the Patriarchs. It was also called the seventh scroll and written on leather. It was so brittle that it took years to soften it up. Young says at the time of his article that only five pages had been viewed. There was also Thanksgiving Hymns and the Rule of Ware.

Other fragments included portions of other Biblical books in Hebrew: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges, Samuel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Psalms. The fragments of Deuteronomy were written in an archaic script "Phoenician" or Palaeo-Hebrew. There were also fragments of non-Biblical works such as commentaries on Micah, Zephaniah and the Psalms, plus the apocryphal works and the Testament of Levi; works dealing with the life and worship of a religious community; collections of hymns, and so forth. In Cave 3 a copper was discovered. There was an abundance of fragments found in Cave 4. These fragments represented about 330 books with 90 of them being from the Bible. Another document from Cave Four, referred to as the "Testimonia," was a collection of Old Testament passages which formed the basis for the Qumran's group messianic expectations. Over six hundred scrolls and thousands of fragments were found in the 11 caves. Fragments of every Biblical book except Esther have been found. The internal evidence of the first two chapters of Habakkuk suggests that they were composed somewhere in the land of Judah around the year 600 B.C. Dr. S. A. Birnbaum thought the scrolls were copied between 100 and 50 B.C.; the Rule of the Community between 125 and 100 B.C.,

and the complete Isaiah scroll (Isaiah A) between 175 and 150 B.C. Dr. J. C. Trever, who accepts Dr. Birnbaum's relative dating of these scrolls, would date each of them a few decades later. For example Isaiah A between 125 and 100 B.C., the scroll of the Rule about 75 B.C., the Habakkuk Scroll was written between 25 B.C. and A.D. 25. According to Professor W. F. Libby the scrolls were placed in the caves around 33 AD.

Another striking aspect in regards to the Habakkuk commentary speaks of men being justified on account of their works and their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness. This is not justification by faith. The commentator had no real understanding of justification by faith since mentioning the word toil.

At Khirbet Qumran lie some ruins about a kilometre west of the Dead Sea. Three rooms were excavated in 1951. There was an old scriptorium (writing room) and remains of the writing desks have been discovered. Even some of the ink has been preserved. Copying and editing manuscripts seem to have been some of the principal occupations of those who dwelt in this monastery as Young puts it. There was also a cemetery just east of it with over a thousand burials which belonged to the Qumran community. The occupation of the place was shown to be between the second century BC and AD 68. After that, it was occupied by a Roman garrison between 68 and 86 AD. Later between AD 132 and 135 Jewish insurgents used it in the second war against Rome. There was a North West tower with the main building near it of some 120 feet square. Other rooms served as assembly rooms or refectories. There was a well preserved pottery factory. There was also a well laid out water supply system. The military occupation of Khirbet Qumran was represented by coins dating from the tie of Nero's reign to the reign of Titus.

Four caves in the area Wadi Murabba'at revealed traces of human occupation between the Chalcolithic Age (fourth millennium B.C.), the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000-1550 B.C.), the Iron Age (800-700 BC), the Roman period and the Arab period. There were written documents found from several periods but interestingly in A.D. 132, a revolt led by a man named Simeon, who struck coins designating himself as "Simeon Prince of Israel" and bearing such significant dates as "Year I of the Redemption of Israel"; "Year II of the Freedom of Israel." Simeon's followers maintained a garrison at Wadi Murabba'at, under the command of one Yeshua Ben-Galgalah. At Khirbet Mird, midway between the Wadi Qumran and the Wadi Murabba'at better known as "the brook Kidron" included papyrus fragments of private letters in Arabic from the seventh and eighth centuries, a Syriac letter (also on papyrus) written by a Christian monk, and a fragment of the Andromache of Euripides in Greek, together with a number of Biblical texts in Greek and Palestinian Syriac. The Greek texts included fragments of uncial codices of Wisdom,

Mark, John and Acts, written between the fifth and eighth centuries A.D.; those in Palestinian Syriac included fragments of Joshua, Luke, John, Acts and Colossians. All these Biblical fragments were of Christian origin, unlike those from Qumran and Murabba'at, which belonged to Jews.

The Qumran community appeared to have had a special interest in the books of Deuteronomy, Isaiah, the Psalms, the Minor Prophets, and Daniel. They attached divine authority to the Law and the Prophets as well the “minor prophets” as Micah, Nahum and Habakkuk were to them inspired oracles, foretelling things which they believed they could recognize as fulfilled in their own day. Apocalyptic and pseud-epigraphic works also held a high level of consideration. The Book of Isaiah was already in its present form as early as 175 BC. Isaiah A was a popular, unofficial copy of Isaiah and could have been the work of amateur scribes. The spelling is much more phonetic than the classical Hebrew spelling. Readers were obviously quite familiar with the use of vowel-letters. This was probably intended to help people who were not expert in reading Hebrew. For this reason Isaiah A throws incidental light on the pronunciation of Hebrew in Palestine in the second century B.C. It deviates only slightly from the traditional text in certain grammatical forms and endings. These make no difference to the meaning, and disappear in the course of translation. A comparison between Isaiah A and the Hebrew one does not involve any significant modification. The text of the Old Testament has a history of main lines. One, the Assoretic line, the other a Greek translation called the Septuagint with available manuscripts from the fourth century A.D. The third is through the Samaritans.

Edward J. Young mentioned that the manuscripts found in the vicinity of the Qumran community or monastery as he puts it were in all probability copied by members of the monastery. But he wants the audience to understand at the same time they don't necessarily reflect the teachings or the practices of the group. They may have been copied merely in order that they might be kept in the library. The library of a modern theological seminary, for example, will contain many books which do not represent the teachings and beliefs of the seminary in question.

Young goes on to say that whoever the inhabitants of the monastery of Qumran were; is it to them that we must go if we are to find the forerunner of Christianity? Did John the Baptist learn from them, and more important, did the Lord Jesus find in them that from which He might learn? Were they forerunners of Him?—some are busy answering these questions in the affirmative. Again, according to the author, of course true that there are certain superficial resemblances between that which is found in the “Manual of Discipline” and the New Testament.

The Qumran community interpreted the Old Testament in light of how it applied to them in their own situation. Even some of the non-Biblical works form part of their system of beliefs and practice. This was unlike main streams of Judaism. Their Rule of War fully illustrates that they believed they were living in the last days, and that all the things foretold by the prophets were due to be fulfilled in the very near future. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs there will be a Messiah of the tribe of Levi who overshadows the Davidic Messiah. The Rule of the Community will live “until the coming of a prophet and the anointed ones (Messiahs) of Aaron and Israel.” The Teacher of Righteousness and his disciples were not Pharisees in the usual sense of the term. Their interpretation of the law and their discipline were severer than those of the Pharisees. The group overall can be summed up as the doctrine of last things. They believed so much that they were in the last days. Their work contained several Christian interpolations. A major one sees the Qumran community and the early Christians agreeing that in the days of the fulfilment a great prophet would arise, a great captain and ruler, and a great priest. However, the three figures remained separate in Qumran expectation, whereas they represent the unified Christ for the Christians.

The Teacher of Righteousness was the organizer of discipline and interpreter of Old Testament prophecy for the Qumran community. The community looked upon him as a sign of the end of ages. One of the chief enemies was the Wicked Priest. This person could have been Alexander Jannaeus, a very wicked king and high priest around 103 to 76 BC. It seems he interrupted one of their holy meetings but they seemed to have repelled him and his associates.

At last, in 142 B.C., the last trace of Gentile domination was expelled from Judea and an independent Jewish state was proclaimed, with Simon, the last survivor of the Maccabaeans brothers (although he was the oldest of them), as head of the state. In the formation of the state of Israel Simon, the last survivor of the Maccabean brother found himself to be the only chief civil ruler and military leader, and high priest as well. The Hasmonean family, to which he belonged, was a priestly family indeed. But it all fell apart when Alexander Jannaeus took over in 103 BC and many of the Hasidim organized themselves as the party of the Pharisees, but one group found a leader in the Teacher of Righteousness. In this they found prophetic authority in Isaiah 40:30: In the wilderness prepare ye the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. If the nation of Israel as a whole was unfit to accomplish the purpose of God, it was their privilege to act as the faithful remnant of the nation as the Qumran community. Their interpretation of the law was exceedingly strict. There was a great importance attached to ritual purification as well as purity of the heart. In several of the community documents it indicated that pupils pursued a form of Gnosticism. This involved knowledge imparted by God

to His servants the prophets and the interpretation of knowledge by the Teacher of Righteousness and his disciples. The organization was hierarchical with priests, Levites, elders, and the rank and file. A council of twelve laymen and three priest governed. Women as well as men were admitted into the community with marriage and family life. Their work included gardening, herdsman, bee-keepers, etc.

According to various histories the Qumran community was a separate group to the Essenes, but this isn't entirely clear or proven. The Essenes were a community who lived unmarried somewhere near the town of Engedi. In his longer account Philo estimates the numbers of the Essenes at about four thousand, and describes them as living in villages, working hard at agriculture and similar occupations, devoting much time (especially on the Sabbath, when they congregated in their synagogues) to the communal study of moral and religious questions, including the interpretation of the sacred scriptures. They paid scrupulous attention to ceremonial purity having no slaves and only admitted adults to membership in their community. Josephus's description of the Essenes strikes us as being factual and reliable. The doctrine of the Essenes is that all things are left in the hand of God. They teach the immortality of the soul, and think it their duty to strive for the fruits of righteousness. They excel all other men in, their manner of life, and they devote themselves wholly to agriculture. They are admired for their righteousness and share all things in common. They believed in the resurrection of the body, as well as in the immortality of the soul.

Raphael Levy deals with scrolls found in Cairo as early as 1897; describing a Jewish sect that regarded themselves as the True Israel. This was fifty years before the Dead Sea Scrolls. One such document known as the Damascus Document or the 'Zadokite fragments' held information about the Essenes idea of priest hood and their lives. One such scholar, Schechter, a Jew and lecturer in the Talmud at Cambridge was instrumental in bringing copies back to England from Cairo. He eventually published his works of translation in 1910, Volume I, Fragments of a Zadokite Work, now referred to as the first Dead Sea Scroll. Additional fragments of this Damascus document were found fifty years later among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran. It also should be said at this point that one Professor Norman Golb hypothesized that the Qumran scrolls were nothing but the library of the Temple hidden during the revolt against Rome. But, alas, there is very little support for this.

Also, the books verify the correctness of the Scriptures which we have today. The next important point is that they give us a look at life just before and during New Testament times. Three shepherds found the scrolls one morning in the winter of 1946 – 47 while looking for goats. Initially, some of the scrolls were taken to a dealer in antiquities, Faidi Salahi, in Bethlehem.

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