

Hidden Treasures
The Dead Sea Scrolls
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Slide 1

1. This is the third presentation looking at Jewish literature written between the end of the events in the Protestant Old Testament and the writing of the New Testament.
2. In the first two presentations, we looked at the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Jewish literature that had a direct effect on the writers of the New Testament and perhaps even on Jesus.
3. In some cases, New Testament writers quoted from or paraphrased these writings.
4. Today, we will look at the so-called “Dead Sea Scrolls.”
5. The Dead Sea Scrolls show how Jewish thought about the Messiah, the end of time, the final judgment, and the source of evil had evolved by the time of Jesus and in many ways mirrored Christian teachings.

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1. The Dead Sea Scrolls get their name from the area near the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea, 10 miles south of Jericho, where they were found.
2. In 1947, a Bedouin boy chasing a stray animal stumbled into one of many caves in this area containing ancient scrolls.
3. Over the next nine years, 10 more caves containing scrolls were found.
4. The most important was cave 4, shown here.
5. More than 15,000 fragments from more than 200 books were found in this cave.
6. At least fragments of all books of the Hebrew Scriptures except Esther were found in the 11 caves.
7. These copies were 1000 years older than any previously known books of the Hebrew Scriptures.
8. The caves also included copies of Pseudepigraphic books that were known previously, including *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*, which we talked about last week.

9. The caves also contained previously unknown books written before any of the books of the New Testament.

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1. After discovering the scrolls, archaeologists began excavations in nearby Qumran.
2. Qumran was occupied from about 150 B.C. until it was destroyed by the Romans in 68 A.D. during the First Jewish Revolt.
3. The relationship between Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls remains disputed.
4. The majority of scholars today believes many of the scrolls were written at Qumran by a strict Jewish sect called the Essenes known to have lived near the Dead Sea at the time of Jesus.
5. Some of the proponents of this idea claim the large room at Qumran was a scriptorium, where the scrolls were produced.
6. For support, they note the number of inkwells found in and near the room.

Slide 4

1. Those who associate Qumran with the Essenes also point to 10 ritual baths.
2. What is known about the Essenes, including from the scrolls found at Qumran, indicates that water was an important part of their rituals.

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1. Not everyone accepts this connection.
2. One argument against the Qumran/Essene connection is that bodies of women and children were found in the Qumran cemetery and the Essenes were known to be celibate.
3. Other scholars have asserted that Qumran housed a pottery factory and the people living at Qumran had no connection with the scrolls.
4. Others claim Qumran was a military fortress.
5. Scholars who reject a connection between Qumran and the scrolls believe the scrolls came from a library in Jerusalem and were hidden in the caves when the Romans began attacking Jerusalem in 66 A.D.
6. Proponents of this view point out that the scrolls do not all reflect the same ideas and must have been written by different groups.

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1. At the time some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were being written, Jesus was teaching in Jerusalem, only a few miles up the Jericho Road from Qumran.
2. Before the Romans destroyed Qumran in 68 A.D, Paul and perhaps the writer of the *Gospel of Mark* were writing that Jesus was the Messiah.
3. Before the publication of translations of all the scrolls, some people claimed that publication was being suppressed by the Pope because the scrolls somehow were inconsistent with New Testament claims about Jesus.
4. The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls never mention Jesus or his followers.
5. The Dead Sea Scrolls also do not mention John the Baptist, even though he was baptizing in the Jordan River a stone's throw away.
6. Similarly, the New Testament never mentions the Essenes or Qumran, even though both existed at the time of Jesus.
7. As we will see, first century Christians and Essenes were not only close in distance –they were close in beliefs and practices.
8. As one author states: **“Especially striking are the numerous similarities between the Qumran community and that of the first Christians, who were active concurrently around the middle of the first century C.E.”** Stone, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* at 547.

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1. One of the earliest scrolls found was originally known as the *Manual of Discipline* but is now called the *Community Rule* and identified as *IQS*, reflecting its location in Cave 1.
2. This scroll defines the rules by which members of what is thought to be the Qumran community were expected to live and was probably written in about 100 B.C.
3. Some of the rules seem peculiar today.
4. For example, one says: **“Whoever has been so poorly dressed that when drawing his hand from beneath his garment his nakedness has been seen, he shall do penance for thirty days.”** *IQS* 7:15.

5. But some of the teachings would be right at home in churches today: **“For mankind has no way, and man is unable to establish his steps, since justification is with God and perfection of way is out of His hand.”** *IQS* 11:10.

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1. Before entering the community, members had to repent by saying: **“We have strayed! We have [disobeyed!] We and our fathers before us have sinned and done wickedly in walking [counter to the precepts] of truth and righteousness.”** *IQS* 1:24 – 27.

2. After such repentance, they could be **“cleansed by purifying waters.”** *IQS* 3:4.

3. According to the *Community Rule*: **“And when his flesh is sprinkled with purifying water and sanctified by cleansing water, it shall be made clean by the humble submission of his soul to all the precepts of God.”** *IQS* 3:9.

4. This language tracks that of *Numbers* 8:7, in which priests were cleansed by being **“sprinkle[d with] purifying water.”**

5. The practice of repentance and purification by water is similar to the activities of John the Baptist, who preached: **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”** *Matthew* 3:2.

6. After people repented, John baptized them in the Jordan River. *Matthew* 3:6.

7. The reference in the *Community Rule* to sprinkling with purifying water is particularly interesting, because many people assume that John immersed repentant sinners in the river.

8. The New Testament says only that John baptized **“with water.”** *John* 1:26.

9. Christian art often portrays Jesus being baptized by pouring water on his head.

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1. According to the New Testament, John was **“preaching in the wilderness of Judea.”** *Matthew* 3:1.

2. **“John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.”** *Matthew* 3:4.

3. Because Qumran was located in the Judean wilderness and because John’s dress and diet matched that known to be characteristic of the Essenes, many scholars have long speculated that John the Baptist was an Essene.

4. The *Community Rule* provides an additional basis for this speculation.
5. Members of the community “**shall separate from the habitation of unjust men and shall go into the wilderness to prepare there the way of Him.**” *IQS* 8:14 - 15.
6. In support of this requirement, the *Community Rule* quotes from *Isaiah* 60:3: “**In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**” *Id.*
7. The New Testament quotes the identical passage from *Isaiah* to explain why John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness. *Matthew* 3:3.
8. It does not take much imagination to conclude that John was in the wilderness in obedience to the *Community Rule*.
9. One author writes: “[I]t is reasonable to conclude that John the Baptist was raised in the tradition of the Essenes and may well have lived at Qumran before taking his message to a wider public.” Shank, *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 214.

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1. The Prophet Jeremiah taught: “**‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.’**” *Jeremiah* 31:31.
2. Jesus told his disciples during the Last Supper that his death would establish a “**new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**” *Luke* 22:20.
3. The writer of *Hebrews* identified Jesus as the fulfilment of the “**new covenant**” promised by Jeremiah. *Hebrews* 8:6 – 13.
4. The new covenant God established through Jesus is one of the most fundamental teachings of Christianity, identifying countless churches.
5. We now that establishing a new covenant with God was not unique with Jesus.

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1. The *Damascus Document* or *Damascus Covenant* is identified as *CD*.
2. Most scholars believe it describes the activities of the same group as the *Community Rule*.
3. According to the *Damascus Document*, the group was led by the Teacher of Righteousness, whose death led to an expectation that the end of time was near.

4. According to the Damascus Document, the Teacher of Righteousness taught his followers that they had entered into a **“new covenant”** with God. *CD* 6:11.
5. If a member stopped acting according to the community’s rules, he would lose access to the covenant’s **“living waters.”** *CD* 6:11.
6. Access to **“living water”** is what Jesus promised to the Samaritan “woman at the well.” *John* 4:10.
7. One authority has noted the **“many similarities between the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus of Nazareth.”** Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period* at 259.
8. But, as one author states: **“One feature that has not emerged in the scrolls is a suffering or dying messiah, despite the valiant attempts of several authors to find evidence for it. It is very likely that this element has its origins in Jesus himself and in the early church’s understanding of his life and mission.”** VanderKim, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 345.

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1. According to the *Community Rule*, after an initiation period, a member accepted into the community was required to hand his **“property and earnings” “over to the Bursar of the Congregation who shall register it to his account and shall not spend it for the Congregation.”** *IQS* 6:19 – 20.
2. After an additional year of following the rules of the congregation, **“his property shall be merged”** with that of the congregation. *IQS* 6:22.
3. Although the New Testament does not mention a probationary period for new Christians, it does indicate that early Christians merged their resources.
4. According to *Acts*: **“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.”** *Acts* 4:32.

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1. Early followers of Jesus claimed to be following **“the Way.”** *Acts* 9:2; 19:23.
2. According to the *Community Rule*, members of the Qumran community also claimed they were following **“the Way.”** *IQS* 9:17 – 18; 10:20 – 21.
3. This knowledge casts Jesus statement in *John* 14:6 in a new light: **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

4. In other words, don't believe others who say they are following "the Way," because that is impossible.

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1. Some of Jesus' most famous teachings rejected the teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures.
2. For example, *Exodus* demands tit-for-tat retribution for injuries, **"eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."** *Exodus* 21:25.
3. Jesus rejected this idea in the Sermon on the Mount: **"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."** *Matthew* 5:38 – 39.
4. In *Luke's* version of this teaching, Jesus says: **"Love your enemies, do good for those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also."** *Luke* 6:27 - 29.
5. Jesus' rejection of Old Testament retributive justice is often seen as one of his most important teachings.
6. In less memorable language, the *Community Rule* also rejects the idea of retribution against persons who have caused harm: **"I will pay to no man the reward of evil; I will pursue him with goodness."** *IQS* 10:17.

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1. The Hebrew Scriptures allow a man to give his wife **"a certificate of divorce"** and **"send[] her from his house"** **"if she becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her."** *Deuteronomy* 24:1.
2. At the time of Jesus, Jewish men were giving certificates of divorce for many reasons.
3. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: **"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."** *Matthew* 5:31 – 32.
4. The *Damascus Document* also rejects people who **"are caught . . . by fornication, (namely) taking two wives in their lives."** *CD* 4:20b–5:6a.

5. Like similar language in *1 Timothy* 3:2, this prohibition has been interpreted as rejecting both divorce and polygamy.
6. The *Damascus Document*, like Jesus, equates divorce with sexual impropriety.

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1. The Sermon on the Mount includes eight Beatitudes, meaning “blessedness.”
2. The *Beatitudes Scroll* found at Qumran includes the identical structure, starting with “[**Blessed is he who walks] with a pure heart.**” *4Q525* 2:1.
3. This is obviously very similar to *Matthew* 5:8: “**Blessed are the pure in heart.**”
4. Another Qumran Beatitude says: “**Blessed are those who rejoice in her.**” *4QS525* 2:2.
5. This is similar to *Matthew* 5:11 – 12: “**Blessed are you when men revile you . . . rejoice and be glad.**”
6. The phrase translated “**poor in spirit**” in *Matthew* 5:3 is not found anywhere else in the Bible, including in the comparable Beatitude in *Luke*, which just describes the “**poor.**” *Luke* 6:20.
7. The phrase “**poor in spirit**” is found in the *War Rule*, also called *The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*, identified as *1QM*.
8. Jesus probably did not copy his Beatitudes from the Dead Sea Scrolls.
9. The structure of the Beatitudes was well known among Jews living at the time of Jesus and Jesus used that structure in delivering his unique message.
10. In the Sermon the Mount, Jesus taught his followers to address God as “**Our Father**” in their prayers. *Matthew* 6:9.
11. A scroll fragment found at Qumran similarly addresses God as “**Our Father.**” *4Q511*.

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1. Apparently an important question among Jews at the time of Jesus was whether they were allowed to rescue animals that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath.
2. The *Damascus Document* said “no”: “**No one is to foal a beast on the Sabbath day. Even if it drop its young into a cistern or a pit, he is not to lift it out on the Sabbath.**” *CD* 11.

3. Jesus rejected this conclusion: **“If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”** *Matthew* 12:11 – 12.

4. The fact that Jesus used the same example as the *Damascus Document* to illustrate his views of what can be done on the Sabbath may mean that he was familiar with the teachings of that document even though he rejected this specific teaching.

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1. *Matthew* quotes Jesus as saying that the end times would occur in **“this generation.”** *Matthew* 24:34.

2. The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls also believed the appearance of the Messiah and the end of time were imminent.

3. The *Damascus Document* predicts that the end would come 40 years after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness. *CD B* 20:13 -22.

4. Another Qumran document proclaims that **“this is the end of days.”** *4QMMT*.

5. But, exactly what type of Messiah the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls were expecting is not so clear.

6. As we discussed last week, the understanding of Christians today that Jews at the time of Jesus all expected the Messiah to be a descendant of David is too simplistic.

7. The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a Jewish writing popular at the time of Jesus, suggested that the Messiah would be a priest descending from Levi. *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* III – 8.

8. According to the New Testament, first century Jews thought John the Baptist might be the promised Messiah. *Luke* 3:15.

9. John the Baptist was a descendant through both his mother and father of Aaron, a descendent of Levi who established the Jewish priesthood. *Luke* 1:5.

10. The *Epistle to the Hebrews* claims that Jesus was a priest even though he was not in the lineage of Levi because the rules requiring priests to be descendants of Levi and Aaron were no longer binding on Jews. *Hebrews* 7:14 – 28.

11. *Jubilees*, another Pseudepigraphic work, suggested that the Messiah would both be a descendant of Levi, the ancestor of Aaron, and of Judah, the ancestor of David. *Jubilees* 31.

12. Multiple copies of *Jubilees* and *Testaments* were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, suggesting that the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls were familiar with them.
13. Probably as a result of their familiarity with these works, the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect the same uncertainty about the lineage of the Messiah as does the New Testament.
14. The Damascus Covenant refers to **“the Messiah of Aaron and (of) Israel,”** suggesting **“one Messiah, of Aaron and Israel simultaneously.”** Stone, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* at 539.
15. But the Community Rule says **“there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel”** (*IQS* 9:11), suggesting a prophet and **“two Messiahs”** *Id.*

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1. The idea that a Messiah would initiate the resurrection of the dead is entirely absent from the Hebrew Scriptures, including the Apocrypha.
2. An extraordinary document from Qumran called the *Messiah Apocalypse*, says that a coming Messiah, who will sit on the **“throne of the eternal kingdom,”** **“liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent]”** and **“will heal the wounded and revive the dead live and bring good news to the poor.”** *4Q521.*
3. This description echoes the words of *Isaiah* 61:1 that the Messiah would **“preach good news to the poor.”**
4. The *Messiah Apocalypse* includes the earliest known Jewish connection between the expected Messiah and the resurrection of the dead that became so important to Christianity.

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1. It is not clear if the idea that the Messiah would resurrect the dead originated with the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls or had become an accepted Jewish idea that these writers simply restated.
2. What seems clear is the expectations set out in the *Messiah Apocalypse* were known by Jesus and the New Testament writers.
3. The *Gospels of Matthew* and *Luke* both report that followers of John the Baptist asked Jesus: **“Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”** *Matthew* 11:2; *Luke* 7:20.
4. Jesus replied: **“Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear,**

the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.” *Matthew* 11:4 – 6; *Luke* 7:22.

5. Jesus’s reported response, in language virtually identical to that of the *Messiah Apocalypse*, told anyone who knew of the expectations of that scroll that Jesus satisfied those expectations and was therefore the Messiah.

6. It is important to note that Jesus was responding to questions from the followers of John the Baptist, whom many scholars believe was familiar with the teachings of the Essenes at Qumran.

7. So, followers of John the Baptist may have known about the Messiah *Apocalypse* and asked Jesus questions based on it to see if he was the Messiah they expected.

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1. Another part of the *Messiah Apocalypse* said that the **“heavens and the earth shall listen to his Messiah.”** *4Q521*.

2. New Testament writers reported Jesus’ power over nature. *Mark* 4:41.

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1. A scroll called the *Aramaic Apocalypse* and identified as *4Q246* is also consistent with how New Testament writers described Jesus.

2. The scroll states: **“[He] shall be great upon the earth, [O King! All shall make [peace], and all shall serve [him. He shall be called the son of] the [G]reat [God], and by his name shall he be named. He shall be hailed the Son of God, and they shall call him Son of the Most High . . . , and his kingdom will be a kingdom forever.”** *4Q246* 1:9 – 2:10.

3. Because the remainder of the scroll has been destroyed, it is not entirely clear to whom this description applies, but many scholars assume it refers to an expected Messiah.

4. The *Gospel of Luke* uses very similar language in relating the angel’s announcement to Mary that she would bear a son: **“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end. *** So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”** *Luke* 1:32 – 33, 35.

5. The title, **“Son of the Most High,”** which is used in both the *Aramaic Apocalypse* and *Luke*, was not used in this form in the Hebrew Scriptures.

6. As one author writes: **“It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Luke is dependent in some way, whether directly or indirectly, on this long lost text from Qumran.”** VanderKam, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 335.

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1. A controversial scroll may also be relevant to first century expectations of the Messiah.
2. A line of a scroll fragment named the *Pierced Messiah Scroll* can be translated as: **“And they shall slay the Prince of the Congregation.”** Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 239.
3. It can also be translated as: **“The Prince of the Congregation shall slay him.”** *Id.*
4. If the scroll is interpreted as **“a reference to an executed messianic figure . . . , it is the first such reference to be found in a pre-Christian text.”** *Id.* at 377.
5. Such an interpretation would have supported early Christian views that Jesus was the Messiah even though he had been **“pierced.”** *John 19:37.*

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1. Contrary to what is often believed, Jewish writings at the time of Jesus described the expected Messiah in language very close to that used in the New Testament to describe Jesus as that Messiah.
2. As one Jewish author recently wrote: **“Jews at the same time of Jesus had been waiting for a Messiah who was both human and divine and who was the Son of Man.”** Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels* at 142.
3. As described in the New Testament, Jesus **“fit the bill”** of the Messiah they had come to expect from Jewish literature. *Id.* at 142.
4. So the question for Jews of the first century was not whether the New Testament description of Jesus matched the people’s understanding of what to expect in the Messiah – based on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Pseudepigrapha we looked at last week, it did.
5. Instead, the question was whether the New Testament description of Jesus as the Messiah matched the people’s understanding of Jesus.
6. For those Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah, it obviously did.
7. As one author writes: **“By confessing that their Messiah had come, the Christians . . . placed themselves further along on the eschatological timetable than**

the Qumran covenanters who were still awaiting the arrival of their two Messiahs.”
Shanks, *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 201.

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1. According to *John*, Jesus said: **“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”** *John* 5:28 - 29.
2. As we have discussed before, the Hebrew Scriptures written before 400 B.C. contain no indication of a final judgment of the dead.
3. That idea entered Jewish thinking with the *Book of Daniel* and the Apocryphal *Book of Tobit*, both of which were found at Qumran.
4. The *Community Rule* reflects a Jewish idea of a final judgment that is very similar to that later articulated by Christians.
5. In explaining the basis for not returning evil with evil, as the Hebrew Scriptures had required, the *Community Rule* states: **“For the judgement of all the living is with God and it is He who will render to man his reward.”** *IQS* 10:17.
6. The *Community Rule* also says that this **“destiny of all the living”** will be determined at the time of **“the Visitation,”** a reference to the coming of the Messiah. *IQS* 4:25.
7. No earlier known writing connects the final judgment with the coming of the Messiah.

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1. As we discussed last week, the Hebrew Scriptures contain no suggestion of eternal punishment of the dead by fire.
2. The idea that the wicked dead would be destroyed in a fire entered Jewish thought through *I Enoch*, copies of which were found at Qumran.
3. The *Community Rule* expressly accepts the idea of fire as the ultimate fate of the wicked: **“[At the final judgment there will be] a multitude of plagues by the hand of all the destroying angels, everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath of the fury of God, eternal torment and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions.”** *IQS* 4:13.

4. According to *Revelation*, at the end of time, the graves will **“g[i]ve up their dead”** and those whose names are not **“found written in the book of life”** will be **“thrown into the lake of fire.”** *Revelation* 20:13, 15.
5. According to Jesus, at the final judgment the damned will be sent **“into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”** *Matthew* 25:41.
6. The *Community Rule* identifies the actions of people who will earn this fate: **“greed, and slackness in the search for righteousness, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and abundant evil, ill-temper and much folly and brazen insolence, abominable deeds (committed) in a spirit of lust, and ways of lewdness in the service of uncleanness, a blaspheming tongue, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart, so that man walks in all the ways of darkness and guile.”** *IQS* 4:10.
7. This list of sins leading to destruction in the fire is similar to the list in *Revelation* 21:8.

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1. The *Community Rule* also describes the fate of those who have followed God’s rules during their lives: **“[I]t shall be healing, great peace in a long life, and fruitfulness, together with every everlasting blessing and eternal joy in life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light.”** *IQS* 4:9.
2. This is very similar to New Testament descriptions of the fate of the righteous with the coming of the Messiah.
3. For example, according to *1 Peter* 5:4: **“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”**
4. Jesus promised that the final judgment would send **“the righteous to eternal life.”** *Matthew* 25:46.
5. The *Community Rule* says that the characteristics of those entitled to eternal life include **“a spirit of humility, patience, abundant charity, unending goodness, understanding, and intelligence; (a spirit of) mighty wisdom which trusts in all the deeds of God and leans on His great loving kindness.”** *IQS* 4:5.
6. Most people today would probably identify these as Christian values, expressed by Jews more than 100 years before Jesus.

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1. The *Community Rule* calls those who follow God’s rules **“sons of light”** and those who reject those rules **“sons of darkness.”** *IQS* 1:10.

2. The New Testament repeatedly uses “**sons of light**” to describe the followers of Jesus. *Luke 16:8; John 12:36; Ephesians 5:8.*
3. Writing to followers of Jesus, Paul states: “**You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.**” *1 Thessalonians 5:5.*
4. As we have discussed previously, the use of light and darkness to describe the struggle between good and evil almost certainly originated with Zoroastrianism.
5. This idea became important to the New Testament writers.
6. For example, according to *John*: “**In him [Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**” *John 1:4, 5.*

Slide 29

1. As we discussed last week, *1 Enoch* explained the origin of evil in the world by describing 200 angels called “Watchers” who rebelled against God and left heaven, mating with human women and producing evil spirits.
2. The *Damascus Document* repeats this story: “**Because they walked in the stubbornness of their hearts, the Watchers of heaven fell; yea, they were caught thereby because they kept not the commandments of God.**” *CD 2:15.*
3. New Testament writers also repeated the story about the rebellious angels. *Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4.*

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1. The *Community Rule*, perhaps written earlier, posits a totally different explanation for the spirits creating evil behavior.
2. In the beginning, God created two opposing spirits “**in equal measure until the final age.**” *IQS 4:16.*
3. “**Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light; but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.**” *IQS 3:20.*

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1. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes: **“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?”** 2 *Corinthians* 6:14 - 15.
2. The name “Belial” does not appear any other place in the Bible in modern translations.
3. “Belial” appears repeatedly in the Dead Sea Scrolls as the name of the chief angel of darkness and evil, equivalent to the New Testament’s “Satan.”
4. One author writes: **“We cannot prove that the passage from 2 Corinthians is a revised Essene text, but Paul uses language here that is known only from Qumran texts.”** Shanks, *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 188.

Slide 32

1. Several passages in the *Community Rule* suggest belief in what is now called “double predestination” -- before a person is born, God determines whether he or she will ultimately choose God’s path or the path of evil.
2. One such passage states: **“Before ever they existed He established their whole design, and when, as ordained for them, they come into being, it is in accord with His glorious design that they fulfil their work.”** *IQS* 3:15.
3. Another says: **“For God has established the two spirits in equal measure until the determined end, and until the Renewal, and he knows the rewards of their deeds from all eternity.”** *IQS* 4:25.
4. Whatever ambiguities may exist is eliminated by this passage: **“God has given [righteousness] to his chosen ones as an everlasting possession, and has caused them to inherit the lot of the Holy Ones.”** *IQS* 11:7.
5. **“Thus the elect were eternally chosen and the wicked eternally rejected -- all before the creation of the world.”** Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period* at 199.
6. Paul later articulated the same idea in his letter to the Romans: **“Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”** *Romans* 9:18.
7. Paul left room in his formulation for the grace of God to overcome his initial election. *Romans* 9:15.

8. The writer of *Community Rule* left open this same possibility: **“As for me, if I stumble, the mercies of God shall be my eternal salvation. *** He will draw me near by His grace, and by His mercy will He bring my justification. He will judge me in the righteousness of His truth and in the greatness of His goodness He will pardon all my sins.”** *IQS* 11:12.
9. This language is very similar to the teaching of Paul about justification by faith, usually considered a uniquely Christian idea. *E.g., Ephesians* 2:8.
10. What is missing in the *Community Rule* is any suggestion that grace is made possible by the death of Jesus, a uniquely Christian teaching.

Slide 33

1. The *Community Rule* states that the forces of evil will be destroyed at the end of time with the coming of the Messiah: **“God has ordained an end for injustice, and at the time of the visitation He will destroy it forever. Then truth, which has wallowed in the ways of wickedness during the domination of injustice until the appointed time of judgement, shall arise in the world forever.”** *IQS* 4:19.
2. The *War Rule* describes a great battle between the **“Sons of Light”** **“against the forces of the Sons of Darkness, the army of Belial [Satan].”** *IQM* 1:1.
3. The battle will lead to the eternal annihilation of the forces of Belial. *IQM* 1:5.
4. *Revelation* similarly predicts **“a battle on the great day of God Almighty”** between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. *Revelation* 16:14.
5. When the forces of God are victorious, Satan will be thrown into the **“lake of burning sulfur.”** *Revelation* 20:10.
6. From that point forward, **“[n]othing impure will ever enter [the earth].”** *Revelation* 21:26.

Slide 34

1. As we have seen, many similarities exist between the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament writers and the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls.
2. As one Jewish author states: **“[T]wo conclusions can be drawn [from the Dead Sea Scrolls]: (1) The early Church grew upon Jewish soil to a far greater extent than previously supposed; and (2) A larger number of early Church beliefs and practices than previously suspected were not unique to it.”** Shanks, *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 201.

Slide 35

1. That same author also writes: **“Christianity’s uniqueness . . . lies not so much in its communal practices and eschatological expectations but in its confession that the son of a carpenter from Nazareth in Galilee was indeed the Messiah and son of God who taught, healed, suffered, died, rose, ascended, and promised to return some day in glory to judge the living and the dead.”** Shanks, *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* at 201.

2. It is that uniqueness that explains why more than two billion people today claim to be followers of Jesus and no one claims to be following Qumran’s Teacher of Righteousness.

Slide 36

1. Next week, we will look at the writings of Philo, Josephus and other contemporaries of Jesus and the writers of the New Testament.

2. We will see how the New Testament writings paralleled the understandings of these contemporary Jewish writers and how they differed.

3. We will also look at how, late in the first century, Jewish authorities began to reject Jewish writings on which some of the teachings of the New Testament were based, giving rise to many of the current differences between Jewish and Christian beliefs.

Resources:

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