

Dan ends with a couple of mysterious calculations as to the time of the End. One must wait patiently (“patient endurance,” in Greek *hypomonē*, is a standard New Testament term for holding out until the End; see 1 Thess 1:3 [noun]; Mark 13:13 [verb]). Daniel is told to go rest and await his lot “at the End of the days.” And thus ends the book which is placed at the end of some versions of the LXX (e.g., Rahlfs’ edition of the *Septuaginta*).

### **Jewish Apocalyptic and the Intertestamental Period: 1 Enoch and Qumran**

*The importance of this topic.* Christianity cannot be understood without some knowledge of Jewish apocalyptic, which flourished in the intertestamental period (from about 200 B.C.E. to about 100 C.E., by which time most of the literature included in the New Testament had been written) and beyond. Thus, “intertestamental” means “between the two testaments,” and it is the period which concerns us now. Knowing a bit about this period is very important, because the ideas and expectations contained in the Hebrew Bible and the LXX continued to develop into the time of Jesus and beyond. We cannot understand Jesus’ message, ministry or Passion, or early Christianity and the New Testament, without understanding the religious thought-world in which they lived and breathed. Our main witnesses for this is the literature which flourished in the time between the Testaments, but which did not make it into the Jewish canon or the New Testament (with some exceptions, since some Christian canons do contain one or more of these works, usually called “pseudepigrapha,” because they are written under pseudonyms).<sup>147</sup>

Apocalyptic dominates much of this literature and period. It is a time of great expectations, when God’s final theophany, or Parousia (appearance) would take place and he would finally save his people.<sup>148</sup> One of the elements of much apocalyptic is in fact the calculation of the time of the End, as we saw in Dan (cf. Rev 1:3; 12:12, 14;

---

<sup>147</sup> Catholics used to call these books the “apocrypha” (hidden”) of the Old Testament.

<sup>148</sup> SCHRAMM, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, 80, states that “Wanke has argued that the matrix of virtually all post-exilic prophecy is located in the mental climate created by Second Isaiah’s proclamation that the time of judgment was at an end and the time of Israel’s salvation had arrived.” One could point also to Haggai’s insistence around 520 that the turn-around (the *peripeteia*, or sudden change in a Greek story) would be “in a little while,” Hag 2:6, 18. The unfulfillment of these prophecies led to the dejection which is manifest in Malachi about seventy years later, Mal 2:17.

22:10), but this is corrected in Mark 13:32. Essential to Jesus’ proclamation, however, is that “the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has drawn near” (cf. Mark 9:1; 13:20; 1 Thess 4:15-17 [an apocalyptic text]; 1 Cor 7:29). We shall see certain features of apocalyptic literature (and perhaps get a glimpse of the people behind it) by briefly examining two representative bodies of work, which are otherwise extremely important for understanding the New Testament. I should further note that in my opinion, the original apocalyptic notion is the prophetic one that true prophecy derives from access to the divine, celestial, court, the *sôd* of Yahweh (something like God’s “kitchen cabinet”), where he deliberates with his advisers, as it were. The word is at times translated “council, counsel, plan, secret.” In the background is the divine council of the Ugaritic literature, with El presiding over the “sons of El,” that is, the lesser deities. This is thought to be behind the plural “let *us* made Adam in *our* own image,” Gen 1:26. A good example of this is the scene in Job 1:6-12, where the Satan, a prosecuting attorney (as later the Johannine Paraclete is like the defense attorney) has his role. A very explicit presentation of the *sôd* and its deliberations is in 1 Kgs 22, where there is also a “lying spirit” similar to the Satan; cf. Zech 3:1-7. Thus, many prophetic books are entitled “vision,” and this indicates access to the divine council, like “hearing it from the horse’s mouth.” See, e.g., Isa 1:1 (cf. Isa 2:1-4, and the dialogue in which the prophet participates in Isa 6:1-11; 40:6); Amos 1:1; 3:7; 7:1-9; Jer 23:18, 22 (access to the *sôd* means one both sees and hears God’s word). So “apocalyptic” has to do with divine revelation, which is what the name means in Greek (in Spanish, Rev is called *Apocalipsis*).<sup>149</sup>

*1 Enoch.* Many beginning Bible students may not recall ever hearing of Enoch or the work known as “1 Enoch” or the “Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch.” This work is explicitly cited in Jude 14, which mentions that Enoch was “seventh after Adam” (see Gen 5:1-18), and prophesied about “them” (certain evildoers in Judas’ own time).<sup>150</sup> There are many other less explicit references or allusions to 1 Enoch in this epistle. This is an indication that circles behind the New Testament writings held 1 Enoch in great

---

<sup>149</sup> PAOLO SACCHI, *L’apocalittica giudaica e la sua storia* (Brescia: Paideia, 1990), 42, says that when prophecy ceased in Israel, that is when apocalyptic emerged, as a new kind of revelation (by illumination) denoting a new kind of salvation. This book has been translated into English.

<sup>150</sup> Note the references in Jude to improper commingling of “flesh;” this is a reference to the sin of the angels in Gen 6:1-4 (who had sex with human women) and of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 19:1-11, who had sex with the two angels who had visited Abraham. The importance of this will be seen shortly.

esteem; perhaps here we could mention the great similarity between Matt 25:31 and 1 Enoch 62:5 (where the Son of Man likewise sits on the throne of his glory to judge).<sup>151</sup>

1 Enoch is part of the canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Although 1 Enoch has close affinities with important elements of the gospels and of the New Testament, it was rejected by Judaism and seldom copied, and this probably had much to do with its non-inclusion in the standard canon of the Christian New Testament.<sup>152</sup> The Ethiopian Church highly esteemed it, and although the original languages were Semitic (Aramaic, perhaps some Hebrew), the only complete copy we have of 1 Enoch is the Ethiopic translation from a Greek translation.

Why are we interested in 1 Enoch? 1 Enoch represents a alternative form of Judaism operative in the time of Jesus, when, as we have stated, there was much pluralism and no dominant party; if there was a “dominant” party, they would have been the Sadducees and others linked to foreign rule, and these not only were not popular with the majority of the people; they had little to do with the thought-world of pious Jews of the type we encounter in Jesus and those who had most in common with him and his followers (except as adversaries, of course). Paolo Sacchi, a provocative Italian scholar, along with his disciple Gabriele Boccaccini, even posit two main divisions in Judaism, that of “Zadokite Judaism” (mainstream Judaism, including the Pharisees, which makes the appellation “Zadokite” a bit strange) and “Enochic Judaism.” Without going that far, I would point to several factors in Enoch which I believe are very important for understanding Jesus’ views and those of the New Testament.

First, as some point out, 1 Enoch may be a sort of Pentateuch, five books (plus appendices), that contrast with the Mosaic Torah. In fact, the Torah and the Sinai covenant are of little importance in 1 Enoch, which takes “a dim view of the Jerusalem

---

<sup>151</sup> A popular edition of this type of literature is the two volume work edited by James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

<sup>152</sup> Tertullian (around 200 C.E.) disagreed with those Christians who were so influenced by the Hebrew canon; Augustine recognized that truths were to be found in the “Old Testament apocrypha,” but pointed to the fact that the paucity of copies of books like 1 Enoch, and the fact that the Jews had not transmitted these texts anywhere near as carefully as the canonical texts made them very unreliable, and “impossible to validate ‘because of their age’ [Enoch was an antediluvian patriarch; how could his book have survived the Flood!];” WILLIAM ADLER, “The Pseudepigrapha in the Early Church,” in *The Canon Debate* (L.M. McDonald – James A. Sanders, eds.; Peabody: Hendrikson, 2002), 224. 0

Temple and its cult;” the real Temple is in heaven.<sup>153</sup> Enoch is much prior to Moses. Early Christianity, and Jesus himself, had an eschatological mind-set: the End Time would be a return to the state originally intended by God in the beginning, but which went awry due to sin and the Fall. Examples of this are Jesus’ going behind Mosaic legislation, as when he criticizes Moses’ allowance of divorce and remarriage (in Deut 24) by saying that it was not so in the Beginning, Matt 19:3-8. The contrasts or antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5, and Matt is considered by many to also be a five-book work) are presented as Jesus’ own exposition of God’s will, and as a modification of Mosaic Torah (or, at least, as an authoritative interpretation of God’s will that goes against the grain of dominant Jewish tradition); cf. Mark 7:1-23, which contradicts not merely Pharisaic interpretation of Torah (*halakah*): by “cleansing or declaring clean” all foods, what does Jesus do to Lev? Paul, also, in Gal 3:17, goes behind the Mosaic covenant back to the Promise made to Abraham, which “trumps” the Sinai covenant. And the prologue of John definitely contrasts Jesus and Moses.

Secondly, 1 Enoch has a “preterhuman” view of sin (Sacchi). Sin is not due originally to human fault, but has a cosmic origin; it is due to the primal sin, the sexual intercourse between angels and humans related in Gen 6. The world is profoundly defiled, impure, because of this; it is under the dominance of evil spirits. The Flood was only a superficial cleansing; a cleansing by fire would be needed.<sup>154</sup> This is in line with the deep pessimism of apocalyptic: the world is in such a bad, utterly corrupt state, that only a new creation by divine intervention will suffice to remedy it. Mere reform has

---

<sup>153</sup> See GEORGE W.E. NICKLESBURG, *1 Enoch 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 50, 55. The Qumran “Temple Scroll,” which has a rewritten Torah, avoids all mention of Moses, the mediator, to stress that their interpretation of Torah and supplements to it are direct from God. They criticize Solomon’s Temple and await the eschatological one God will himself build, which will be a new creation. Like the Enochians, Qumran follows a solar calendar. The name of God for them is an ‘almost hyposticized divine presence’; see LAWRENCE H. SCHIFFMAN, “The Theology of the Temple Scroll,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 85, No. 1-2 (Jul.-Oct. 1994), 109-123. He is of the opinion that in the Qumran scroll known as “MMT” “the period of return expected by Deuteronomy has indeed dawned”(123).

<sup>154</sup> See GABRIELE BOCCACCINI, *The Roots of Rabbinic Judaism, An Intellectual History from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2002), 91. Note the theme of fire in the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt 3/Luke 3), and this theme as well as the omnipresence of evil spirits requiring exorcism in the ministry of Jesus. Cf. Eph 6:10-13; Col 2:15. One could also point to Jesus’ cleansing or purification of the leper in Mark 1:40-44 and of the woman with the blood flow in Mark 5:25-34; menstruation rendered very impure (see Lev 20:18). Purity was of enormous concern to the “Enochians,” but they did not see the solution in the Temple cult. Cf. John the Baptist’s non-Temple baptism “unto the forgiveness of sins.” Jesus’ “cleansing of the Temple” was really a symbol of its destruction. More on this later.

been proven to be inefficacious. Where were the effects of the new covenant of Jeremiah 31, or the other covenant of Deut 28/29, or the new heart of Ezek 36? Clearly, all that had been done after the Exile consisted of temporary, half-way measures. Devout Jews of the Enochic type expected, demanded, needed, much more.<sup>155</sup>

Thirdly, the approach to time of 1 Enoch and related literature was different than that of mainstream Judaism. This book advocates the use of a solar calendar, perhaps an ancient priestly calendar older than the lunar calendar adopted in Babylon. Enoch himself had lived a significant 365 years, Gen 5:22-24, before being taken up to God (only Elijah was likewise privileged), where he received his revelatory visions.<sup>156</sup> The Qumranites also espoused a solar calendar, and this was a significant “dissident” position to take vis-à-vis “official Judaism.” It is possible, as Annie Jaubert has argued, that Jesus and his followers celebrated Passover on a different day than most Jews, which would explain a significant discrepancy between the Synoptic and Johannine chronologies for the crucifixion (Passover before the crucifixion in the Synoptics, after according to John 18:28; 19:14, 31). Further, in the 1 Enoch section called the Apocalypse of Weeks, all history is divided into ten units called “weeks,” and

the ten ‘weeks’ total seventy units, itself a highly significant number in light of Jeremiah’s prediction that Jerusalem would be desolate for the seventy years of Babylonian control . . . and the decisive “week,” that is, the one in which the actual author lives and when the great turning point in history will begin is the seventh. As  $7 \times 7 = 49$ , the total brings to mind associations with the biblical jubilee (which the author of *Jubilees* [another work advocating the solar calendar and very important at Qumran] and others understood as a forty-nine-year unit).<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Both 1 Enoch and Qumran will depict a “heavenly, eschatological high priest commissioned to cleanse the polluted earth;” NICKLESBURG, *1 Enoch 1*, 54. In 1 Enoch, it is the archangel Michael (which some associate with the Danielic Son of man); in Qumran, 11QMelchizedek, it is Melchizedek, “portrayed as a divine hypostasis,” (Rabbi) JOSEPH M. BAUMGARTNER, “Messianic Forgiveness of Sin in CD 14:19 (4Q266 10 I 12-13),” in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Technological Innovations, New Texts & Reformulated Issues* (D.W. Parry – E.W. Ulrich, eds.; Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill Academic, 1999), 537-544.

<sup>156</sup> See also Heb 11:5.

<sup>157</sup> VANDERKAM, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 104. In 11QMelchizedek, mentioned above, “Melchizedek is to proclaim liberty [*dʿror*, Lev 25:10; Isa 61:1] for all the Sons of Light by releasing them from the burden of their sins. This will take place on the day of Atonement at the end of the tenth jubilee;” BAUMGARTNER, “Messianic Forgiveness,” 539. Jesus proclaims the eschatological “liberty” of Isa 61 in Luke 4:18-21 as being fulfilled “today.” I believe that what we are to pray for in the Lord’s Prayer (“forgive us our sins”) depends on our forgiving others their sins *and debts* (Luke 11:4) as in the Jubilee year cancellation of all indebtedness; see the Sabbatical year provisions in Deut 15:1-3.

We recall the use of “weeks” in Dan 9 to interpret Jeremiah’s prophecy, and to provide calculations for the end of the period before salvation arrived. In both, as at Qumran, the period is that of ten Jubilees, or 490 years. In the Qumran document 11QMelchizedek, which announces eschatological forgiveness of sin on the tenth Jubilee, this final Day of Atonement is identified with the “good news” of Isa 40 and Isa 61 (which mentions the “anointed [messiah] of the Spirit”). Jesus does not seem to have formed part of the scholarly, scribal, esoteric circles which cultivated such intricate calendrical calculations, but when he proclaimed, as part of the kernel of his message, that the “time was fulfilled,” he may have well had in mind something like the end of the period of waiting prophesied by Jeremiah, Second Isaiah and Daniel; his use of the Jubilee word “liberty” in Luke 4 points to just such an idea (this would not be just another Jubilee to be repeated after another 49 years!).

The most celebrated section of 1 Enoch are the “Parables or Similitudes,” chapters 37-71, now “Book Two” in the manuscripts.<sup>158</sup> This is the latest part of 1 Enoch to have been composed, but we have not yet given any dates of composition for 1 Enoch. Roughly, the earliest parts are from the third century B.C.E.; Aramaic copies of the “Astronomical Book” (the earliest chapters of 1 Enoch) have been found in Qumran dating “from a time not far from 200 B.C.E.”<sup>159</sup> The date of the Similitudes is disputed; since 1 Enoch was so important at Qumran, why do the copies not contain the Similitudes? The Qumran settlement was destroyed in the war of the Jews against Rome, in 68 C.E. So some scholars think that the Similitudes were composed after that date. But very prominent Enoch scholars, like George Nicklesburg and James VanderKam, believe that they could date from the end of the first century B.C.E. or early in the first century C.E.<sup>160</sup>

It is in the Similitudes in which the Son of Man figures so prominently. He is a combination redeemer figure: Son of Man hidden before all eternity, but also the Messiah

---

<sup>158</sup> Formerly the second book was that of the Giants; recall that a race of giants was the product of the illicit sexual union of angels and human women in Gen 6; it was the spirits of these giants loose in the world which unleashed such evil in the world, an evil which was beyond human strength to overcome, according to Enochic lore.

<sup>159</sup> VANDERKAM, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 89.

<sup>160</sup> VANDERKAM, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 110; NICKLESBURG, *1 Enoch 1*, 7: “This section, which will be treated in volume 2 of this commentary, appears to be the latest of the Enochic texts and probably dates to the late first century B.C.E.”

and the Chosen-Righteous Servant of Isaiah. He sits on his “throne of glory” to judge, just like Jesus the Son of man in Matt 25:31. Note how this represents a development from the time of Dan 7 *ca.* 165 B.C.E. There it is not clear that the “one like a son of man (human being)” was the Messiah (though Jewish tradition would arrive at this later). Neither is there a clear connection between the “one like a son of man” and the Servant of Isaiah, although the “saints of the Most High” (who are described as receiving the Kingdom, dominion and other prerogatives in terms very similar to the “one like a son of man,” Dan 7:18, 27), via the *maskîlîm*, seem to be linked to the Isaianic servants. But all these connections, or rather, combinations or confections, occur clearly in the Parables or Similitudes of Enoch.<sup>161</sup> There are many other relevant features of this literature, known to Jude and other New Testament writers, and to Jesus himself, which we could discuss, but cannot, in the context of this introduction. But at least we know that Jewish groups were engaged in the same kind of “unitive exegesis” (as F.F. Bruce said of the Qumran texts) as the New Testament writers, and Jesus himself, were doing at the same time. This situates the Jesus movement in the context of the late Second Temple period and its religious ideas, images and expectations, and allows us to better, more fully and accurately, interpret the biblical texts.

*Qumran.* On the northwest corner of the Dead Sea, beginning in 1947, were found numerous scrolls written in Hebrew (most), Aramaic (fewer) and Greek (only a few), which date from about 200 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.<sup>162</sup> This is an amazing library probably hidden away in the caves of Khirbet Qumran (Arabic for “the “ruins of Qumran”) by an Essene group, in order to prevent its destruction during the war against Rome 66-73 C.E. It was accidentally found by Bedouin shepherds, and has provided us not only with the oldest copies of the Hebrew Bible (and the only complete scroll of Isaiah, for example), but also with the writings and biblical interpretations of very pious Jews who were Jesus’ contemporaries and who shared many similar ideas with John the Baptist, Jesus and the early Christians. It thus is a very important find in order to understand Jesus’ world, and that of the early Church. No, Jesus is not mentioned in the Scrolls, nor is John the Baptist, despite the sensationalist claims that have been made, often by fanciful amateurs, at times

---

<sup>161</sup> One important difference, however, is that although the Son of Man in 1 Enoch delivers those who suffer, he does not himself suffer; see VANDERKAM, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 112.

<sup>162</sup> See VERMES, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 10, 13.

by opportunistic scholars. And, no, the Catholic Church did not hide the Scrolls for fear that it would destroy Christianity, as certain movies suggest.<sup>163</sup> In fact, the original international team of Dead Sea Scrolls scholars included several Catholic priests, who broadly lectured and published on the Scrolls. Most noteworthy among them was the great French Dominican Roland De Vaux, a worthy successor at the *École Biblique et Archéologique Française* in Jerusalem to the eminent Père Marie-Joseph Lagrange, O.P., the founder of modern Roman Catholic biblical studies.<sup>164</sup>

Let us begin our discussion of the relevance of Qumran for the New Testament (and for Jesus) by pointing to a remarkable foundational text. Both the Qumranites and John the Baptist are associated with the beginning of Second Isaiah, “in the desert (or wilderness) prepare the way of the Lord,” Isa 40:3; Mark 1:3; “Community Rule,” 1QS VIII, 14. Now Second Isaiah, in the late Babylonian Exile, proclaims the good news of liberation: the exiles have already paid (expiated) for their sins and can now return to the Land in a New Exodus far greater than the one from Egypt; this is the end of the captivity, the reversal of fortunes, the time of salvation and new creation. The Qumranites, aware that in the time after Isaiah sin had not stopped and salvation had not come, withdrew into an “artificial” Exile in “Damascus” (actually, the Desert or Wilderness of Judea), to prepare for the coming of the God of judgment and salvation.<sup>165</sup> They were the community of the New Covenant of Jer 31, the true Israel, the “converts or

---

<sup>163</sup> There are no New Testament texts which are clearly dependent on anything composed by the Qumranites. There are many ideas which are paralleled in the Scrolls. Two passages which have language quite close or identical to that found in Qumran are “sons of light” passages (the Qumranites called themselves the “sons of light”), 1 Thess 5:5; Luke 16:8; John 12:36, and 2 Cor 6:14-15 (Belial or Beliar was the name for the devil in certain circles, including Qumran). When discussing the ideas of Qumran or of the Scrolls, I am referring to their extrabiblical writings. By the way, at least partial copies have been found of all the books in the Bible except Esther. At the time of the community’s disappearance from Qumran (*ca.* 68 C.E.), it seems clear that there was no fixed canon of the Hebrew Bible (that is, after the Torah and the Prophets, different groups considered different books to be in or out), and the text of the Hebrew Bible was not yet uniform (the Qumran manuscripts, e.g., have different spelling, etc., at times contents). Qumran is thus important both for the history of the biblical text and of the canon.

<sup>164</sup> See the colorful descriptions of the charismatic De Vaux in EDMUND WILSON, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* (New York: Oxford, 1965), 45-48. See also the references to him in the index of FRANK MOORE CROSS, *The Ancient Library of Qumran. 3rd Edition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1958, 1961<sup>2</sup>, 1995<sup>3</sup>).

<sup>165</sup> “Damascus” as a place of Exile is mentioned as such in an early text, Amos 5:27. The voluntary Exile of the Qumranites was still on the west side of the Jordan, that is, within Israel. “Damascus” may thus have been appropriate as a name, since it was nearer than Egypt or Babylon. Note that the quote from Amos 5:27 in Acts 7:43 has “Babylon” instead of “Damascus”!, and this does not come from the LXX. In the New Testament, Rome is called “Babylon” in 1 Pet 5:13 and in Rev.



penitents (or, if you want, “returnees,” *sh<sup>e</sup>vy*: these are all possible translations of this derivative of the verb *shuv*) of Israel.”

This is a most important concept. Our main thesis throughout these pages has been that “exile” is a metaphor or a metonym (a figure of speech used to refer to another thing, in this case, a deeper, spiritual or theological reality) for the time before “salvation,” or, in more Jewish terms, before entry into the messianic age or into God’s rest or inheritance. After the Babylonian Exile, the Jews had returned to the Land, but this was not the end of Exile, as witnessed by Zech 1:12 and Dan 9:1-2. Here we have the Essenes, or the Qumranites (which may have been the stricter, more committed branch of the more spread-out Essene movement, which Josephus numbers at 4,000), voluntarily exiling themselves in preparation for God’s coming, viewed as a divine manifestation to take place after the eschatological battle between the “sons of light” and the “sons of darkness,” to be followed by the final judgment and redemption. This is a simplified description of what “they” expected (scholars make many distinctions between documents, periods, etc.), but, essentially, the Qumranites (the people who copied, composed and preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls) expected the End Time in the near future. They did penance, saw themselves as “converts, penitents,” in Exile, awaiting the coming of one (or two) Messiahs, as well as the Eschatological Prophet (of Deut 18:15). They practised sexual abstinence (probably not actual “celibacy,” which is renunciation of marriage), probably to maintain themselves in the state of ritual purity required for the impending holy war.<sup>166</sup> They performed many ablutions, ritual washings associated with purification. They awaited the “anointed of the Spirit” of Isa 61 and a heavenly, eschatological redeemer who would finally cleanse from all sin and bring the final forgiveness (perhaps that spoken of in Jeremiah’s New Covenant passage (Jer 31:31-34; cf. Heb 7-8).

Let us again look at 11Q Melchizedek, the remarkable Qumran document we briefly discussed above. This will give us the opportunity to get a good glimpse of this

---

<sup>166</sup> VERMES, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 83, says that “The symbolic approach of the sect to sacrificial worship may account for Essene celibacy (where it was practised). Sexual abstinence was imposed on those participating in the temple services, both priests and laymen; no person who had sexual intercourse (or an involuntary emission, or even physical contact with a menstruating woman) could lawfully take part. More importantly still, bearing in mind the central place occupied by prophecy in Essene doctrine, clear indications exist in inter-Testamental and rabbinic literature that a similar renunciation was associated with the prophetic state.”

Jewish sect’s expectations for the End Time of “salvation” (I place this word in quotation marks because it is mostly a Christian word now and might lead one to impose foreign categories on Jewish ideas). The fragments which have been published stress the Jubilee “release” of all debts; here “release” (*s<sup>e</sup>mittah*) comes from Deut 15:2, though Lev 25:13 (regarding the Jubilee) is also quoted. The Qumranites viewed Sacred Scripture as referring to their own days (like the early Christians did); the particular Qumranite commentary (or midrash) on Scripture, applying it to their own time, is called *pesher* (interpretation). This is their commentary here:

for G[od]. Its interpretation] for the last days refers to the captives, who [. . .] and whose teachers have been hidden and kept secret, and from the inheritance of Melchizedek, fo[r . . .] . . . and they are the inherita[nce of Melchize]dek, who will make them return. And liberty will be proclaimed for them, to free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities. And this [wil]l [happen] in the first week of the jubilee which follows the ni[ne] jubilees. And the d[ay of aton]ement is the e[nd of] the tenth [ju]bilee in which atonement shall be made for all the sons of [light and] for the men [of] the lot of Mel[chi]zedek. [. . .] over [the]m . . . [. . .] accor[ding to] a[ll] their [wor]ks, for it is the time for the «year of grace» of Melchizedek . . .<sup>167</sup>

Note the following. Various Hebrew Bible passages are interpreted as referring to the End Time. The whole tenor of the passage is that “liberty” (the *d<sup>e</sup>ror* of Lev 25:10 and Isa 61:1) will be proclaimed to the “captives,” from the verb *shuv*. This “liberty” (release from debts, slavery, captivity, etc.) takes on the form also of forgiveness of sins, in the context of the Day of Atonement (on which the Jubilee is to take place, Lev 25:9). It will be on the tenth Jubilee, that is, after 49 x 10 years, or on the 490<sup>th</sup> year, as in Dan 9. This is called the “year of grace,” as in Isa 61:2 (quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:17-21). The Qumran text further on also explicitly refers to “the messenger who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation,” of Isa 52:7, and interprets this messenger as “the Anointed one of the spirit, concerning whom Dan[iel] said, [Until an anointed one, a prince (Dan. ix, 25)] . . . .”<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition. Volume 2 (4Q274-11Q31)* (F. García Martínez – E.J.C. Tigchelaar, eds.; Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill; Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1997), 1207. The last three dots are mine (I stopped quoting); the other dots are in the text. The brackets indicate *lacunae* (gaps) and the conjectured restoration of the passage. I have omitted the verse numbers found in this edition.

<sup>168</sup> This quotation I took from VERMES, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 501, omitting his italics. The “Anointed of the spirit” is a reference to Isa 61:1. Cf. Acts 10:38.

There is also in Qumran the notion of an eschatological high priest who will expiate sins. This is found in a text which is similar to an intertestamental work known as the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and specifically, the Testament of Levi. Rabbi Baumgartner describes the figure in the Qumran passage, after briefly quoting from the passage, thus:

"His word is like the word of the heavens, and his teaching according to the will of God. His sun will illumine the world and his fire will burn to all the ends of the earth." Despite this glorification, he is depicted as the object of rejection and calumny on the part of his antagonists, much like the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. Yet, he is to atone for all the children of his generation . . .

\* \* \*

The claim that [to atone for] always refers to ritual expiation is contradicted by the occasional usage in both biblical and Qumran usage of this phrase for divine forgiveness. Moreover, even if we take [*kipper*] in the sense of expiation, the allusion to the hostile disparagement suffered by the priest suggests that like the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53:10) his humiliation was itself considered to constitute an [*asham*], a guilt offering for the sins of his generation.<sup>169</sup>

We could say much more about the Qumranites and their Dead Sea Scrolls. They were a priestly sect who had separated themselves from Jerusalem and its Temple, which they deemed corrupt and in the hands of the wrong priests. They are thought to have been Zadokites who became apocalyptic under the influence of the Teacher of Righteousness, after 'groping in the dark like blind men for twenty years'. They hated the Pharisees and were much stricter than them, but unlike most priests, became very eschatologically-oriented and apocalyptic, cherishing and interpreting the Prophets whom the Sadducees rejected. We have to stop here. But I hope that what we have seen sheds some light on the world in which Christianity emerged. This is what we hope becomes clearer in what follows.

---

<sup>169</sup> BAUMGARTNER, "Messianic Forgiveness," 540. I omitted two footnotes, the Hebrew text at the end of the first paragraph, and transliterated the Hebrew words and placed them in brackets. The asterisks denote that I skipped part of the text I was quoting from.