

1. The Dead Sea Sect and Its Worldview



I

The discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls, whose authors were apparently the Essenes, has generated many new insights into different areas of the study of ancient Judaism, and will undoubtedly continue to do so. It is particularly worth noting that the discovery of the Scrolls provides for us the earliest known example of the ancient sectarian literature, and therein lies their import, as research tools into the social and religious underpinnings of the sects. The material that has been published thus far does not provide us with a comprehensive picture of the spiritual evolution of the sect, but with every new publication we are able to piece together a fuller picture of the religious ferment within the sect. The publication of the Hebrew collection *Otsar ha-Megilot ha-Genuzot (The Dead Sea Scroll Treasury)*¹ which is now widely available, sheds new light on the spiritual dilemmas of the sect, and it seems to me that we can now hazard a preliminary reconstruction of the spiritual development of the Qumran community.²

All the sectarian texts found in the Judean Desert exhibit a series of core

1. *Otsar ha-Megilot ha-Genuzot*, E. Sukenik (ed.) (Jerusalem, 1954). [Translator's note: The Dead Sea Scrolls are cited according to *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar (eds.) (Leiden, 1997-1998).]

2. The present study assumes that the sectarian writings found in the Qumran caves were produced by a single group. It is evident that they belong to the library of the community whose remains have been excavated, and that the texts all refer to a select group, outside of which there is no salvation.

religious and social beliefs, which define the sect and distinguish it from the rest of the Jewish people. The classic formulation of this worldview is found in the third and fourth column of the Manual of Discipline. The sectarian view is ultimately based on a doctrine of dualism, which divides the world into two warring factions: the faction of light and the faction of darkness. According to the Qumran authors, every divine act is guided by this duality (1QS 3.25). The faction of light is led by the angel Michael, the Prince of Light (1QM 17.6), while the faction of darkness is headed by Belial, the Prince of Depravity. The entire world is divided, with each faction including both humans and angels. The sons of light, who are governed by the authority of light, are, in fact, the members of the Qumran community. The sons of darkness, on the other hand, are the people of evil, consisting of anyone who opposes the sect and its teachings. The doctrine of the bifurcated world and its warring factions is related to the sectarian belief in predestination: “Before they existed He established their entire design. And when they have come into being, at their appointed time, they will execute all their works according to his glorious design, without altering anything” (1QS 3.15-16). “Before creating them You know all their deeds for ever and ever. . . . Without You nothing is done, and nothing is known without your will” (1QH^a 9.7-8). Thus, the division into two hostile groups was determined prior to the creation of the world. God furthermore decided who would be counted among the righteous, who among the wicked: “For you created the just and the wicked” (1QH^a 12.38, and see also 7.14-21 and CD 2.7-12). And yet, this division is only temporary: “God, in the mysteries of his knowledge and in the wisdom of his glory, has determined the end to the existence of injustice and on the appointed time of the visitation he will obliterate it for ever” (1QS 4.18-19). The scrolls preserve many eschatological visions concerning the destruction of the wicked, fantastic descriptions of reversals in the natural order of the world, an eruption of the forces of evil from hell, and a violent war between the forces of good and evil both on earth and in the heavens. Only the good will be spared the otherwise total destruction — where “the good” refers, quite naturally, to the members of the sect themselves.

These key doctrines are found throughout the Qumran writings. That said, a close examination of the individual texts reveals differences in the doctrines and beliefs expressed in each. What is the nature of these differences? Is there a discernable conceptual evolution, or perhaps there were different aspects to their teachings? The following survey will attempt to answer this question.

What was the core position of the sect concerning the creation of new ideas within the Qumran community? The teachings of the sect — of at least

some of them — were esoteric, and never intended for Israel as a whole. Indeed, the members of the sect were commanded to “hide the counsel of the Law in the midst of the men of injustice” (1QS 9.17, and see also 10.24, and 1QH^a 13.24-26). And yet, when the same member was afforded religious revelation of some kind, it was forbidden to keep it to himself, lest the elders of the community be angry with him: “And every matter hidden from Israel but which has been found out by the Interpreter, he should not keep hidden from them for fear of a spirit of straying”³ (1QS 8.11-12, and see also 9.16-19). Josephus also mentions these two complementary rules: according to his account, members of the Essenes would vow “to conceal nothing from the members of the sect and to report none of their secrets to others” (JW 2.141).⁴ As for the rule requiring that members make available their discoveries to the broader community, it is tied to the sect’s historiography, to wit, that the entire course of history, from *arche* to *eschaton*, has been divinely foreordained: “Everything has been engraved before you with the stylus of remembrance for all the incessant periods and the cycles of the number of everlasting years in all their predetermined times, and they will not be hidden, and will not be lacking from before you” (1QH^a 9.23-25). The history of the world has been foreordained, divided into a series of “times” or eras, to the point that it is said of human beings “You have shared out their tasks in all their generations” (1QH^a 9.16). One wishing to live according to God’s will must, then, adopt a series of changing attitudes, each according to the events of his time, of his generation. He must, then, “walk with everyone in the measure of the truth and the regulation of the time” (1QS 8.4, and see CD 12.20-21). This is the reason for the positive approach toward the religious ferment within the community — it was seen as a means of calibrating the spiritual and practical position of the sect with the changing course of history. The occasional revelations of divine will that manifested themselves within the community provided guidance regarding the appropriate position to be adopted vis-à-vis the shifting conditions, and it was the sect member’s obligation to act accordingly. It was incumbent upon him “to be united in the counsel of God and walk in perfection in His sight, complying with all revealed things concerning the regulated times of their stipulations” (1QS 1.8), while the Qumran sages were enjoined “to fulfill the will of God in compliance with all revelation for every period; he should acquire all the wisdom that has been

3. The term ‘straying’ (לסגת) refers in the Qumran texts to a betrayal of the sect’s covenant. In the Manual of Discipline, the man is cursed who “enters this covenant, and places the obstacles of his iniquity in front of himself to stray” (1QS 2.12), “may he be cut off from the midst of all the sons of light because of his straying” (1QS 2.16). The Damascus Document distinguishes between those who ‘stray’ and those who ‘hold fast.’

4. All citations from Josephus follow the Loeb edition, translated by Thackeray.

gained according to the periods and the decree of the period” (1QS 9.13-14, and see also 9.18-20, 8.15-16, 10.25-26, 4QPHab 7.11-14).⁵

The practical outcome of the community’s positive disposition toward the revelations occurring in its midst, was that the individual members supported the evolution of its sectarian doctrine, and even guided it. Needless to say, the publication of individual views within the sect entailed a critique of the spiritual innovations of any individual member.⁶

II

The full elucidation of the intellectual evolution under discussion hinges on the following questions: when were the individual scrolls composed? The excavations at Khirbet Qumran⁷ demonstrate that the sect settled in the Judean desert during the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-104 BCE), or perhaps Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE),⁸ and remained there (apparently with an interruption of a few decades during the reign of Herod) until the summer of 68 CE, when the region was destroyed by the soldiers of the X legion, during the war of Vespasian.

Two of the sect’s works reflect a recognizable political-historical setting, thereby allowing us to determine the date of their composition. The first of these is the War Scroll, an eschatological apocalypse, in which the Sons of Light (i.e., the members of the cult) will conquer the entire world in forty days. Their main enemy is the “Kittim of Assyria,” that is, the sons of Japheth

5. The present discussion is intended as a supplement to my article on Qumran’s view of prophecy, “The Apocryphal Book of *Ascensio Isaiae* and the Dead Sea Sect,” *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, 3-20.

6. Of course, only innovations that did not break with the core beliefs of the sect could be accepted. Josephus recounts that the Essene initiate vowed “to transmit their rules exactly as he himself received them” (BJ 2.142), perhaps the oath alluded to in 1QH^a (6.20): “I do not exchange your truth for wealth, or for a bribe all your judgments” since “all who know you do not change your words” (6.15).

7. See R. de Vaux, “Fouilles au Khirbet Qumrân,” *RB* 61 (1954), 206-236.

8. I am of the opinion that they settled in the desert during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. According to Josephus (AJ 13.311; BJ 1.78), Judah the Essene studied with his students in Jerusalem during the reign of Aristobulus I. The epithet “the exiled of the desert” (1QM 1.2) indicates that the community sought refuge in the desert from persecution, thus making it unlikely that some members remained in Jerusalem. I concur with Seligman (review of Karl Elliger, *Studien zum Habakuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953], *Qiryat Sefer* 30 [1956], 44) that Jannaeus is a leading candidate for the “wicked priest” who persecuted the Teacher of Righteousness, who was the founder of the sect.

and their king — referring to the Hellenistic king in Syria, one of the Seleucid emperors.⁹ Since Syria was conquered by Tigranes of Armenia in 83 BCE, and later became a Roman province, it stands to reason this is a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the War Scroll.¹⁰

The second datable work is Peshar Habakkuk, a typological interpretation that elucidates the words of the prophet as references to the history of the sect.¹¹ Most scholars agree, and with good reason, that the Kittim¹² “who . . . come from far off, from the islands of the sea, to devour all the nations, like an eagle, insatiable” (1QpHab 3.9-12), who occupy a central place in the Peshar, are the Romans, who appeared on the Jewish historical horizon at this time. The author of the Peshar understood full well that the Romans would play an important role in the history of the Jews, and predicted quite accurately that “the last priest of Jerusalem, who will accumulate riches and loot from plundering the nations” will ultimately have their loot “given into the hands of the army of the Kittim” (1QpHab 9.4-7), that is, the Romans. Peshar Habakkuk, then, was composed prior to 63 BCE, when Pompey conquered Jerusalem.¹³

9. The material on the Kittim in the War Scroll has been collected by Seligman in his review of Elliger, p. 43, n. 17.

10. I believe that it is possible to date the War Scroll more precisely to the reign of Jannaeus (see n. 8), which included a civil war during which the sect might have entertained the hope of seizing political power by force. The opening paragraph of the War Scroll (1.1-7) describes the political situation during which the apocalyptic war will erupt. Though the paragraph is poorly preserved and difficult to reconstruct, I believe there are grounds to suppose that it reflects the reality of 89 BCE, when Demetrius Eucerus invaded the land “being helped by the violators of the covenant” (1QM 1.2), namely, the Pharisees. I hope to discuss this issue more fully at a later date.

11. In addition to Peshar Habakkuk there are also fragments of Peshar Micah and Peshar Psalms, both of which display a similar interpretive approach, and may have been composed at the same time — and perhaps by the same author. Philo speaks (Quod omn. Prob. Liber §82) of an Essene custom in which following the Sabbath study of Scripture, a learned man would stand and explain everything that was in need of elaboration “symbolically”: τὰ γὰρ πλεῖστα διὰ συμβόλων ἀρχαιοτρόπῳ ζηλώσει παρ’ αὐτοῖς φιλοσοφεῖται. It appears that Philo’s symbolic interpretation of the Essenes refers to the typological approach of the Peshar texts.

12. According to Josephus, this name applies to the nations of all the islands, and to most of the Sea People (AJ 1.128). The word appears to originate in the phrase “But ships shall come from Kittim” (Num. 24:24), and was applied by Second Temple speakers to foreigners who came by boat. Thus the Kittim mentioned in the War Scroll (as in 1 Maccabees 1.1 and 8.5) are the Greeks, while those in Peshar Habakkuk (and in Daniel 11:30) are the Romans.

13. And see M. Z. Segal, “On the History of the Sect Yahad,” *Tarbiz* 22 (1951), 138-140; Seligman’s review of Elliger, 43-44. I believe these scholars date Peshar Habakkuk too early, since they fail to notice that the text distinguishes between two historical eras: that of the Teacher of Righteousness — which is referred to in the past tense, and that of the Kittim — referred to in the future tense.

The Manual of Discipline is the sect's regulations, while Hodayot is a collection of religious poetry. Neither provides explicit references to the political reality of the day, and so must be dated using — among other tools — their intellectual and doctrinal content. As I will argue in what follows, this content points to a relatively late composition. Among other factors leading to this conclusion is the conciliatory and irenic political tone of these texts, which contrasts with the activism of the War Scroll, on the one hand, but accords with Josephus's description of the Essenes as peace seekers, on the other. Moreover, I will argue that the Hodayot, which are appended to the end of the Manual of Discipline, contain innovative religious doctrines, unattested in the other Qumran texts. Therefore, the presumed order of composition would be: the War Scroll (prior to 83 BCE), Peshar Habakkuk (prior to 63 BCE), the Manual of Discipline, and the Hodayot.¹⁴

III

Do the scrolls reveal the social background of the Qumran community? Among the members of the sect, a special role is played by the priests: the sons of Aaron governed the property of the sect (1QS 9.7), taught Torah and proper conduct (1QS 6.3-5, CD 4.3-4, 5.5), and were “asked for their counsel in every matter” (1QS 6.4). It is undoubtedly no coincidence that the founder of the community, the Teacher of Righteousness, is himself a priest (Peshar Psalms 2.15, Peshar Habakkuk 2.8). Among the priests of the sect, a special place was reserved for “the sons of Zadok, the priests who safeguard the covenant” (1QS 5.2, and see also 9.14, and CD 4.3-4, 5.5). As a result, scholars have concluded — rightly, it seems — that certain priestly families played a crucial role in the establishment of the sect.¹⁵

Throughout its existence, members of the community refer to themselves with the biblical term *'evionim*, the word from which the Ebionites de-

14. The dating of the Damascus Document is knottier. Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* (Oxford, 1954), x, rightly asserts that the Damascus Document is made up of two distinct compositions that were united by a medieval copyist. Needless to say, there is no assurance that the two compositions were originally produced at the same time.

15. See, in particular, Segal, “On the History of the Sect Yahad,” 137 and 149. Based on the interpretation of Ezekiel 44:9 in CD 4.3-4, Seligman (review of Elliger, 44) argues that the term “Sons of Zadok” is used symbolically in the Qumran scrolls. However, he fails to notice that the passage also interprets the word “priests” (*kohanim*). That the priests played a practical role in the sect is evident both from the scrolls themselves and from Josephus, and see also Rabin, *Zadokite Documents*, 14.

rive their name. In using this term, the Qumran community apparently sought to emphasize their own asceticism and poverty — a corollary to their virulent attacks against the wealthy and privileged. The roots of this ideology of poverty — a pattern that repeats with other movements in other historical eras — are found in the lower social and economic status of most of the Qumran sectarians. The Qumranites are distinguished by their poverty from the wicked, for “the strength of heroes lies in the abundance of luxuries, . . . the abundance of grain, wine, oil; they take pride in their belongings and possessions” while the members of the community thank God that “You have not placed my support in greed, nor in wealth . . . nor have you placed the inclination of the flesh as my refuge” (1QH^a 18. 22-25). They did not view their poverty as merely the result of social injustice; they elevated their poverty to a worldview. Not only does it distinguish them from the wicked rich, it acts as a positive force; they are not mere paupers, they are “poor in grace,” that is, the poor who have a share in God’s grace. The phrase “poor in spirit” (1QM 14.7) marks the sect as a collective of the poor, within which the holy spirit acts, that is, as a community with a positive religious message.¹⁶ Indeed, the ideological commitment to poverty manifested itself in the community’s practice of shared property, as discussed both by Josephus and by the Manual of Discipline. Josephus says of the Essenes “Riches they despise” (BJ 2.122). The ideology of poverty was closely connected with the ascetic tendencies evident at Qumran: they eat one plate with a single course at each meal (130), avoid oils that soften the skin (123), and refuse to wear new clothing or shoes until the ones on their body deteriorate completely (126).¹⁷ Indeed, audible laughter was prohibited within the community: the bylaws of the sect determine a punishment for any member “who giggles inanelly causing his voice to be heard” (1QS 7.16). The radical avoidance of any worldly pleasure is rooted in the ascetic spirit that dominated the sect. No member of the community “should walk in the stubbornness of his heart in order to go astray following his heart and his eyes and the musings of his inclination. Instead he should circumcise in the Community the foreskin of his tendency and of his stiff

16. The early followers of Jesus, who apparently also hailed from the same lower strata, referred to themselves as “poor” (Luke 6:20) and “poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3). The scrolls prove that the Matthean language should not be rejected as a later church emendation in the “Pauline” spirit.

17. The view that the Essenes avoided alcohol is not supported by the ancient sources. The Manual of Discipline (6.5) states that the Qumranites drank *tirosh*, a word that can be translated according to its Mishnaic sense of unfermented juices (see Y. M. Grintz, “The Members of the Qumran Community” (Hebrew), *Sinai* [1953], 15), or according to its biblical sense of “wine.”

neck” (1QS 5.4-5). Josephus similarly remarks (BJ 2.120) that the Essenes “shun pleasures as a vice and regard temperance and the control of the passions as a special virtue.” This asceticism leads to a certain intensity in their social and intellectual tendencies, and finds expression primarily in an abdication of personal freedom for the sake of sectarian discipline. The Manual of Discipline demonstrates the extent to which the community’s bylaws systematically took over the life of the individual, and even over his thoughts. The totalizing demands the sect made of its individual members were undoubtedly a powerful force in shaping it as a single social entity. Moreover, the ascetic demands included a separation from the dominant society and its norms:¹⁸ a practical manifestation of the hostility the community felt toward the rest of society, portrayed as the lot of Belial and the Sons of Darkness, whose norms must be uprooted.

The contrast between the socially ascendant groups within Second Temple Jewish society, on the one hand, and the community of “the poor” (*’evionim*), on the other, is further highlighted in the honorable title “the simple of Judah” (1QpHab 12.4).¹⁹ The first Christians also adopted this honorific,²⁰ casting themselves as the simple to whom God has revealed the secrets kept hidden from “the wise and the intelligent.” It is possible that the Qumranites who adopted this epithet did so to highlight their radical rejection of the teachings of the sages. For according to the scrolls, the teachings of official circles are not only misguided, they are deleterious: “They are mediators of fraud and seers of deceit, they have plotted a devilish thing against me . . . to change your Law, which you engraved in my heart, for flattering teachings for your people; they have denied the drink of knowledge to the thirsty, but for their thirst they have given them vinegar to drink, to consider their mistake. . . . But they, hypocrites, plot intrigues of Belial, they search you with a double heart, and are not firmly based in your truth. . . . They speak to your

18. Following Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*, M. J. Olgin (trans.) (New York, 1926).

19. It appears the epithet ‘the simple’ *’eta’im* derives from the sectarian midrash on “The Lord protects the simple; when I was brought low, He saved me” (Psalm 116:6). It appears they interpreted the verse to apply to themselves, the simple whom God keeps and will, in the future, redeem them, since they accepted their poverty willingly.

20. The gospels (Matt. 11:25-30, Luke 10:21-22) preserve a prayer of thanksgiving attributed to Jesus, which begins: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to the simple.” The prayer is similar to the Hodayot not only in its rhythmic structure and the opening “I thank you”: the *torah* mentioned by Jesus is — like the sect’s — an esoteric teaching made known only to a select few, referred to as the simple, the same title applied to the Qumran community. (The Greek *νήπιοι* corresponds here — as in the Septuagint — to the Hebrew פתאים.) And see E. Meyer, *Ursprung des Christentums* (1924), 280-291.

people with staggering lip and weird tongue to convert to folly all their deeds with deceit. . . . For they said of the vision of knowledge: It is not certain! and of the path of your heart: It is not that!” (1QH^a 12.9-18). These words bespeak an opposition between certain circles in Second Temple Judaism and the Qumran community, and, indeed, a conflict between two mutually exclusive worldviews, each claiming exclusive truth.

There was clearly a deep rift between “the poor of grace” and their contemporaries, a rift explained by the scrolls in theological terms, as part of the division of the world into two warring parties. “For God has sorted them into equal parts until the last time, and has put an everlasting loathing between [their] divisions. Deeds of injustice are an abhorrence to truth and all the paths of truth are an abhorrence to injustice. (There exists) a violent conflict in respect of all their decrees since they cannot walk together” (1QS 4.16-18). This dualistic doctrine provides an ideological grounding for the sect’s hatred toward the broader society, that is, toward all who rejected their teachings and lifestyle, and refused to share in their plans. The members of Qumran vow “to love all the sons of light, each one according to his lot in God’s plan, and to detest all the sons of darkness, each one in accordance to his guilt in God’s vindication” (1QS 1.9-11; and see Josephus, BJ 2.139). Hatred toward the surrounding society is thus transformed into a religious commandment. The dualistic doctrine similarly justifies the radical disengagement from others, since they are the wicked who are to be avoided. “None of the men of the Community should acquiesce to their authority in any law or regulation. No one should eat of any of their possessions, or drink or accept anything from their hands unless at its price. . . . No holy man should support himself on any deed of futility, for futile are all those who do not know the covenant. And all those who scorn his word he shall cause to vanish from the world; all their deeds are uncleanness before him and there is uncleanness in all their possessions” (1QS 5.15-20, and see also CD 6.14-16). Their isolated residence in the desert allowed the Qumran community to strictly adhere to God’s commandment, that a chasm be maintained between the two parties that make up humanity. The desert community set itself apart from “the dwelling of the men of sin” (1QS 8.13), and distanced itself from all of the sinful society of their day. At the same time, the desert affords an effective means for the ascetic withdrawal of the community from all worldly pleasures, from “the noise of the nations and the uproar of kingdoms” (1QH^a 14.7).

That said, it is clear that the move to the desert has a concrete social function as well. After all, many popular movements in antiquity had their genesis in a departure for the desert. This move was motivated by the difficult social conditions, and often by pressures and persecutions that caused the

group to seek safe haven in the desert. It appears that persecution played a role in the Qumran community's move to the desert.²¹ Proof of this is found in the War Scroll (which in our reckoning was composed early on in the existence of the sect), which refers to the members of the community as "the exiled of the desert" (1QM 1.2), that is, as having been forced to go into exile in the desert. According to the War Scroll, the members of the community will do battle against the forces of the enemy "when the exiled sons of light return from the desert of the nations to camp in the desert of Jerusalem" (1QM 1.3). Here, then, the departure for the desert is seen as a means of concentrating the forces needed for the revolutionary military operation.

In those days, anyone seeking a total revolution adopted an apocalyptic doctrine. After all, these doctrines hold that the corrupt order cannot be overturned until the current world passes away and a new world order arises, one suited to divine justice. Man cannot precipitate this revolution unaided; righteousness will take the place of corruption only with divine assistance. The apocalyptic thinker sees himself as living in the final generation, and thus maintains the hope of seeing the dawn of a new, just world.

We saw above that for the Qumran community there existed a chasm between them and the rest of Jewish society, a.k.a. the Sons of Darkness, a chasm that could only be bridged in the end of days, when evil is completely abolished. The worldview of the "poor of grace" was, then, thoroughly apocalyptic: they believed their time was the end time. They were "those who observe the Law, whose hands will not desert the service of truth when the final age is extended beyond them, because all the ages of God will come at the right time, as he established for them in the mystery of his cunning" (1QpHab 7.11-14). God, then, has revealed to them the secrets of "the consummation of the era" (1QpHab 7.2), which they may yet live to witness. Only the righteous — these being, of course, the members of the Qumran community — will be spared the total annihilation. In them will the verse "The meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity" (Ps. 37:11) be fulfilled, a verse that concerns "the congregation of the poor who will tough out the period of distress and will be rescued from all the snares of Belial" (4QpPs^a 2.9-11). The end of days will usher in not only a cosmic revolution, but a social revolution, here on earth, in which "the wicked ones of Israel will be cut off and exterminated for ever" (4QpPs^a 3.12-13), and "the congregation of his chosen ones . . . will be chiefs and princes" (4QpPs^a 3.5). The apocalyp-

21. These persecutions did not cease even after the community had exiled itself, as "the Wicked Priest pursued the Teacher of Righteousness to consume him with the heat of his anger in the place of his banishment" (1QpHab 9.4-6).

tic doctrines did not merely console the Community, they promised wonderful rewards to those who steadfastly adhere to the community of the poor.

It should be noted that the scrolls published thus far do not emphasize the role of the messiah. True, one of the Hodayot speaks of the birth of “a wonderful counselor with his strength” (1QH^a 11.10), i.e., the messiah.²² There are also scattered references to “the messiahs of Aaron and Israel” (1QS 9.11),²³ references to the messiah and to the high priest of his time;²⁴ however, so far none of the scrolls that have been discovered give voice to doctrines or beliefs that involve the personality of the messiah (or the two messiahs). It appears that the relatively marginal role of the messianic figure within the religious system of the scrolls is the result of the central role played by the Qumran community itself in the redemption of humanity.

Apocalyptic beliefs are intended from the outset to motivate the believers to change their ways: they are formed for this very purpose, and accepted by their holders as such. The nature of the change depends, of course, on the content of the beliefs. Thus, the belief of Jesus and his disciples that the kingdom of heaven had already appeared, situated them in a realm of purely ethical considerations, which led to a fundamentally pacifistic decision. In contrast, the doctrine of the absolute eradication of evil in the end of days — which appears in all the major scrolls — contains a strong element of resistance to contemporary society as such. This apocalyptic view is rooted in the dualistic nature of Qumran’s teachings: in the end of days the lot of Belial will be annihilated and the sons of light will rule the world. But the hope for eschatological revolution was not presented as a flight of fancy. For it is this hope that inspired one of the Qumran scribes to compose the War Scroll, with its detailed discussion of the war between the sect and its enemies. In this war, which will last forty years (see also 4QpPs^a 1.6-8), the sons of light will emerge from the desert, conquering the Land of Israel, then the entire world. The author does not merely imagine the development of the war —

22. This particular hymn teaches an eschatological dualism. When the mother of the messiah becomes pregnant, there will be another who is “pregnant with a serpent” in Sheol, and when the messiah is born “the gates of Sheol will open for all deeds of the serpent” (1QH^a 11.1-18). Most of the hymn is devoted to this eruption of evil forces.

23. And see also CD 7.21, 20.1, 13.21, 14.19. Admittedly, the current form of CD speaks of **משיח אהרן וישראל** “the messiah of Aaron and Israel” (and once of the messiah *from* Aaron and Israel [CD 20.1]). However, it is clear that the copyist “corrected” the difficult phrase “the messiah of Aaron and Israel” by omitting the *yod* of **משיחי**. The discovery of the scrolls has demonstrated the error of building mountains of interpretation on the omitted *yod* of a medieval copyist.

24. On the doctrine of the two messiahs in Qumran and elsewhere, see Grintz, “The Members of the Community,” 30-33.

conditions that will hold at the time of its outbreak. As noted, we are of the opinion that these conditions could not hold after 83 BCE. The war will begin “when the exiled sons of light return from the desert of the nations to camp in the desert of Jerusalem” (1QM 1.5). It would appear, then, that we are situated at the beginning of the community’s desert sojourn, the beginning of its exile. The ultimate goal of the war — world conquest — is admittedly fantastic, but it should be noted that the scroll allots six years of battle to the conquest of Israel, and that most of the text is devoted to battling a very real enemy, the “Kittim of Assyria” and their (Seleucid) king. The detailed description of the warriors’ armaments and battle tactics further suggests that the author believed this to be a realistic plan. It appears the War Scroll was intended to urge the members of the community to hasten salvation through military force. After all, this was a period of fierce civil wars and recurring invasions by foreign enemies; a military adventure might not have seemed so far-fetched. Indeed, a group centered in the desert may well have hoped that, given the general upheaval in the Land of Israel, they might enjoy the same success as the early Maccabees.

The driving force behind the War Scroll and its military plans was the ideological commitment of an apocalyptic mind. This would be the war to end all wars. The two camps facing off in battle are, in fact, the two factions into which God has divided the world. The “Sons of Light,” the Qumranites, will fight the Sons of Darkness, with absolute victory to the former. Then there will dawn “a time of salvation for the nation of God and a period of rule for all the men of his lot, and the everlasting destruction for all the lot of Belial” (1QM 1.5). Indeed, the entire cosmos will participate in the war, and the Sons of Light will receive succor from heavenly forces, “for this will be the day determined by him since ancient times for the war of extermination against the sons of darkness. On this (day), the assembly of God and the congregation of men shall confront each other for great destruction. The sons of light and the lot of darkness shall battle together for God’s might, between the roar of a huge multitude and the shout of gods and of men” (1QM 1.10-11). The confidence of the author that “the poor whom you save” will be able “to fell the hordes of Belial” (1QM 11.8-9) is, then, based on two factors. First, the belief that the entire war is part of God’s plan — for “since ancient time you determined the day of the great battle . . . to exterminate all the sons of darkness” (1QM 13.14-16). And second, the expected assistance of the heavenly hosts, headed by “the majestic angel of the kingdom, Michael” (1QM 17.6).

The War Scroll, then, is an admixture of apocalyptic visions and sober military strategy; a cosmic victory is assured the Community by its advanced

war tactics. This combination of mythical doctrines and *Realpolitik* considerations, which allowed the author to plan the war down to the most minute details, is not *sui generis*. To the contrary, this is the typical ideology of Jewish messianic movements, as well as various medieval sectarian movements — an ideology that on occasion succeeded in pushing its adherents into actual war (as with the Hussites and the German peasants). As far as we know, however, the Qumran community never tried to carry out the plans of the War Scroll.

We have seen that the War Scroll advocates one of the core beliefs of Qumran, namely the division of the world into two factions (see particularly 1QM column 13). The enmity toward the “lot of Belial” — couched as a religious commandment by the sect — encouraged them to conceive of a military action that will destroy the Sons of Darkness. The division of the world into two factions is understood as a divine decree that precedes the creation of the world. In other words, there was current at Qumran a belief in “double” predestination (*praedestinatio duplex*):²⁵ God determined who would be righteous and who wicked. “You, you alone have created the just man, and from the womb you determined him for the period of approval to keep your covenant . . . to open all the narrowness of his soul to eternal salvation and endless peace without want. And you have raised his glory above flesh. But the wicked you have created . . . from the womb you have predestined them for the day of slaughter. For they walk on a path that is not good . . . their soul loathes your [covenant]. . . . You have established all those . . . to carry out great judgments against them before the eyes of all your creatures” (1QH^a 7.17-23). Both the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked are divinely predestined. As scholars have noted,²⁶ the belief in double predestination does entail that its adherents passively submit to their fate. When the believers believe that as members of God’s lot they must act in accordance with God’s will, the *praedestinatio duplex* can provide them confidence and determination,²⁷ “for all their deeds are in your truth” (1QH^a 14.8-9). In addition to this confidence, the doctrine of double predestination can engender among its adherents an ideology of military activism (e.g., Cromwell’s puri-

25. I hope to demonstrate in a separate study that this doctrine made its way into Christianity from the Qumran community or a sister movement.

26. See M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (1922) 1.102, n. 2, and 1.11, n. 4.

27. Adding to Weber’s statements (cited in the previous note), I would point out that it is precisely the *double* predestination that exhorts its believers to action. The notion that God created both the righteous and the wicked recognizes these as moral categories. A person who feels that he has been selected to righteousness, and that his deeds are just, is confident in all his actions.

tan soldiers), for the enemies of God's select were indeed created to be punished. Moreover, the victory of the righteous over the Sons of Belial has been foreordained, and thus may be seen as a *fait accompli*. The War Scroll espouses the doctrine of predestination (see in particular 12.1-5) and believed that the enemies' downfall at the hands of the sons of light is a foregone conclusion, since "we, in the lot of your truth, rejoice in your mighty hand . . . whose mighty hand is with the poor . . . since ancient time you determined the day of the great battle . . . to humiliate darkness" (1QM 13.12-16).

From these statements it is clear that the dualism, double predestination, and apocalypticism of the Qumran community could engender an activist ideology (as indeed happened in other movements), and, as the War Scroll clearly demonstrates, this activism took on a military form. Of course, this ideology is not limited to a single book. After all, the War Scroll was accepted within Qumran, so the hopes of its author were shared by the community, at least for a time. As we will see, even after the sect underwent a significant spiritual transformation, the Qumran community did not completely relinquish their activist stance,²⁸ but rather postponed the earthly revolution to the distant future time. Apparently, the War Scroll came to be understood as referring to this more distant future.

IV

The day of judgment awaited by the War Scroll's author never came. The members of the community began to realize that "the final age will be extended and go beyond all that the prophets say, because the mysteries of God are wonderful" (1QpHab 7.7-8). When the Romans invaded, the Qumranites saw them — and not the members of the community — as the instruments of divine wrath against "the last priests of Jerusalem . . . [for] in the last days their riches and their loot will be given into the hands of the army of the Kittim" (1QpHab 9.4-7).

Were it not for the existence of elements that proved themselves malleable to these new developments, the failure of the activist line might have signaled the collapse of the Community altogether. But the extant sources portray the Dead Sea community as a fascinating example of the evolution of a

28. Josephus famously describes the Essenes as pacifists, but he also tells of John the Essene, who fought valiantly against the Romans (BJ 2.567; 3.11, 19). It stands to reason that the Essenes — or at least some of them — were swept up in the national uprising against the Romans. Those who participated in the war probably felt that the predestined day of judgment had arrived.

philosophy that manages to preserve itself only by altering the meaning of key concepts, even to the point of outright reversal.

The activism that had earlier dominated now became a conditional pacifism. To be sure, the members of the Community did not relinquish their dream of ultimate victory, but they did allow that the time for this victory was not yet at hand. They are now “[those who keep] their nerve until the time of your judgments” (1QH^a 6.4). The community bases this new position on the doctrine of double predestination, which itself undergoes a transformation. The same view that had previously emboldened the author of the War Scroll to outline a holy war aimed at annihilating the lot of Belial, now becomes an ideology of patient acceptance of the injustice that governs the world. The new logic is as follows: God predetermined the time of vengeance against the Sons of Darkness according to his secret wisdom, but has yet to reveal this time to his followers. It is incumbent upon the members of the sect to avoid any rash activity that might undermine the world order established by God since before creation, for “all who know you do not change your words. For you are just, and all your chosen ones are truth. All injustice and wickedness you obliterate for ever, and your justice is revealed to the eyes of all your creatures” (1QH^a 6.15-16). Similarly we find admonitions to each member of the Community that “in this time . . . all that happens to him he should welcome freely and be gratified by nothing except God’s will . . . [and] wish for nothing that he has not commanded and be ever alert to the precept of God” (1QS 9.24-25). In other words, he must acquiesce to the unjust decrees of the government of Belial that currently rules the world, since this too is God’s will and one cannot rise up against it. The day of judgment will surely come, but for now it is necessary “to reply with meekness to the haughty of spirit, and with a broken spirit to the men of the bending (of the Law), those who point the finger and speak evil” (1QS 11.1-2). It is from this spirit of acquiescence to the evil forces governing the world that the community member prays to God, promising: “I shall not repay anyone with an evil reward; with goodness I shall pursue man. For to God (belongs) the judgment of every living being, and it is he who pays man his wages. I shall not be jealous with a wicked spirit, and my soul shall not crave wealth by violence. I shall not be involved in any dispute with the men of the pit until the day of vengeance” (1QS 10.17-19). Josephus too recounts — in an almost precise parallel — that the Essene swears “to keep his hands from stealing and his soul pure from unholy gain” (BJ 2.141). But he omits to mention that they abstain from revolutionary activity only for a limited time — “until the day of vengeance.” The demand to acquiesce to those wielding worldly power has ramifications for one’s personal behavior: not only must one abstain from violence toward them, it is

necessary to obey their political and economic demands. “In this time,” the Manual of Discipline enjoins “everlasting hatred for the men of the pit in clandestine spirit. To them he should leave goods and hand-made items like a servant to his master and like one oppressed before someone domineering him. He should be a man enthusiastic for the decree and for its time, for the day of revenge. He should perform (God’s) will in all that his hand should tackle and in all that he controls, as he commanded” (1QS 9.21-24). Following the failure of the activist approach, the hatred of the men of the pit — the very people who are to be destroyed in the approaching day of vengeance — is buried under the facade of the absolute subjugation fitting of slaves!

There is a further parallel between Josephus’s description of the Essenes and the scrolls, with regard to the acceptance of imperial authority. According to Josephus, they vow “to keep faith with all men, especially with the powers that be, since no ruler attains his office save by the will of God” (BJ 2.140). Here too Josephus makes no mention of the temporary nature of this subjection, nor of the “everlasting hatred for the men of the pit in clandestine spirit.” Did the Essenes manage to hide their hatred of society at large and their eagerness for the day of vengeance from Josephus, or did he omit these details because they did not fit with his portrait of the Essenes as Jewish philosophers, seekers of peace and brotherhood? Whatever the case, the Manual of Discipline and the Hodayot describe a community that refrains from evil and lovingly accepts their worldly suffering. Their outward behavior fits well with the ideal portrayal of the Essenes known from Josephus and Philo — assuming, of course, one overlooks the doctrine of eternal hatred and vengeance to which they secretly adhered.

Like all Jewish movements, the Qumran community considered itself *verus Israel*, “Israel who walk in perfection” (1QS 9.6).²⁹ But when their hopes of gaining political power came to naught, the hope of being identified as the sum total of the Jewish people was dashed as well. Only when the sinning Israel will be destroyed, only, then, in the eschaton, will the Community alone remain as the true Israel. As a result, the destruction of all the nations of the world — the main focus of the War Scroll — is almost wholly absent from the other scrolls. The contrast between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness is limited, in practical terms, to sectarian hatred aimed at the rest of the Jewish people.

The shift in the Yahad’s attitude toward mainstream Judaism finds expression in the content of the term *berit*, covenant. The author of the War

29. Manual of Discipline 8.12 reads “And when these come into being in Israel,” and the scribe added “a Yahad” above the line — perhaps an appositive gloss to ‘Israel’?

Scroll knows of a single covenant, the one God forged at Sinai with “a nation of holy ones of the covenant” (1QM 10.10): “You established a covenant with our fathers and ratified it with their offspring for times eternal” (1QM 13.7-8). But in other scrolls, the word **ברית** often signifies the teachings of the Sect, its rules and its commandments, to the exclusion of the remainder of the Jewish people: “for futile are all those who do not know the covenant” (1QS 5.19). This covenant is the result of God’s graceful selection of the Community, and so it is called “a covenant of grace (**ברית חסד**)” (1QS 1.8). It is also referred to with the biblical eschatological name “new covenant” (CD 6.19; 8.21; 1QpHab 2.3). True, this “new covenant” does not — as Christianity would have it — nullify the old, but it is — as it is for Christianity — a *sine qua non* of salvation. The community of “God’s chosen” (1QpHab 10.13) has become a sect, in the technical sense of the word.

The author of the War Scroll believed the members of the Community will ascend together from the desert of Jerusalem, seize the Temple, and their priests “shall take their positions at the burnt offerings and the sacrifices, in order to prepare the pleasant incense of God’s approval, to atone for all his congregation” (1QM 2.5), but when this vision failed to materialize, there developed a severe religious and practical difficulty: the members of the Yahad believe the Temple to be defiled and presently not able to be purified. How, then, can they maintain their religious obligations toward God while distant from the impure Temple? Their answer was to represent the commandments and special purity restrictions of the Yahad as a full and satisfactory substitute for the Temple service in which they never participated. In their words: “When these exist in Israel in accordance with these rules in order to establish the spirit of holiness in truth eternal, in order to atone for the guilt of iniquity and for the unfaithfulness of sin, and for approval for the earth, without the flesh of burnt offerings and without the fats of sacrifice — the offering of the lips in compliance with the decree will be like the pleasant aroma of justice and the perfectness of behavior will be acceptable like a freewill offering” (1QS 9.4-5). Indeed, the special commandments of the Qumran community are described as “pleasing atonement” (1QS 3.11).³⁰ The men of the Yahad

30. Josephus and Philo refer to this issue in their description of the Essenes. Philo recounts that the Essenes “have shown themselves especially devout in the service of God, not by offering sacrifices of animals, but by resolving to sanctify their minds” (Quod om. Pr. 1.75; following F. H. Colson’s translation for the Loeb edition). And Josephus is referring to this as well in saying that “They send votive offering to the temple, but perform their sacrifices employing a different ritual of purification. For this reason they are barred from those precincts of the temple that are frequented by all the people and perform their rites by themselves” (AJ 18.19). Josephus’ account has given rise to various speculations as to the “offerings” of the Essenes. Some scholars suggested

conclude that the defiled sanctuary in Jerusalem is not, in fact, the Temple — rather, the sect itself is the true Temple: “at that time the men of the Community shall set apart a holy house for Aaron, in order to form a most holy community, and a house for the Community for Israel, those who walk in perfection” (1QS 9.5-6; see also 8.4-11; CD 3.19-4.4). The elevation of the Temple to a spiritual-mystical symbol is for the God-community of the Yahad a response to their distance from the actual Temple services. The elevation of the Yahad itself to the status of a spiritual Temple provides the conceptual underpinnings for the special role of the priests in the community. It is likely no coincidence that immediately following the words of 1QS cited above, there follows: “Only the sons of Aaron will have authority in the matter of judgment and of goods, and their word will be definitive” (1QS 9.7).

V

The Essene psalmist who composed the Hodayot compares the men of the Yahad to “trees of life in the secret source, hidden among all the trees at the water” (1QH^a 16.5-6). The Community lives in hiding, set apart from the evil world that refuses to recognize it: “He who causes the holy shoot to grow in the true plantation hides, not considered, not known, its sealed mystery. But you, O God, you protect its fruit with the mystery of powerful heroes and spirits of holiness, so that the flame of the searing fire will not reach the spring of life, nor with the everlasting trees will it drink the waters of holiness, nor produce its fruit” (1QH^a 16.10-13). The small group of God’s select sits in the Judean desert, adhering to its teachings and commandments, and abstaining from any activity “until the time of your judgment” (1QH^a 6.4). For now, it is incumbent upon the Qumran community “to take root before they grow and their roots extend to the gully” (1QH^a 16.7). They must drink the holy waters from the source of divine knowledge and immerse themselves in the wondrous secrets of God.

What were the challenges facing the men of the Yahad in those days?

that the phrase διαφορότης ἀγνείων means “the distinction of the offerings,” failing to notice that this is merely a scholastic form of διάφοροι ἀγνεῖαι (the various offerings) of the Essenes, mentioned in BJ 2.159. (Compare διάφοροι βαπτισμοί in the Epistle to the Hebrews 9:10). This was apparently understood by H. Liezmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche* (1937), 1.22. It should also be noted that the Latin translation of *Antiquities* (6th century) and the Epitome (10th or 11th century) read: θυσίας οὐκ ἐπιτέλουσιν διαφορότητι ἀγνείων. This reading is not attested in any of the manuscripts, and it is clear that the οὐκ has been inserted in a misguided attempt to emend the text and thus clarify its meaning.

They delved deeply into the question of mankind, its natural baseness and the glory that God gracefully sets upon it. There emerged from within the Community the spiritual doctrine of man's election through divine grace, a doctrine that has so far been found only in the hymn appended to the Manual of Discipline and in the hymns of the Hodayot.³¹

The dualistic doctrine of Qumran asserted that there is a unity between the good and the pure, on one hand, and between the evil and the impure, on the other. The spirits of light engender "generous compassion with all the sons of truth, of magnificent purity which detests all unclean idols" (1QS 4.5), while to the spirit of deceit belong "appalling acts performed in a lustful passion, filthy paths in the service of impurity" (1QS 4.10). The same identification of impurity and sin is heard in the words of the War Scroll: "Accursed be all the spirits of [Belial's] lot for their wicked plan, may they be damned for their deeds of filthy uncleanness" (1QM 13.4-5).³²

Like most apocalyptic thinkers, the members of the Qumran community believed that the present days are governed by the forces of deceit, or, to use their dualistic phraseology, the current era is "all the days of Belial's dominion" (1QS 2.19; 1.23; and see also CD 4.12-13; 6.14; 12.23; 1QpHab 5.7). In light of this, the Manual of Discipline concludes, that if the world is currently under the dominion of Belial and his lot — the source of all impurity — then the world itself is in the realm of impurity. The world "has been defiled in paths of wickedness during the dominion of injustice until the time appointed for the judgment decided" (1QS 4.19-20). Even mankind itself has been defiled in sin by the dominion of Belial, and will be restored only in the end of days, when the rule of evil is abolished. "Then God will refine, with his truth, all man's deeds, and will purify for himself the structure of man, ripping out all spirit of injustice from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness from every wicked deed. He will sprinkle over him the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from

31. To be sure, the doctrine of man's inherent impurity and election through divine grace is found only in liturgical texts. But this does not mean that the doctrine is limited to this genre, since the Manual of Discipline contains extended theological discussions, while the War Scroll contains numerous liturgical passages. It appears, then, that the doctrine is absent from the scrolls published thus far simply because it had not yet been formulated at the time of their composition.

32. Thus it is clear that the purification of the Yahad in the "waters of uncleanness" (מִיַּדְיָ) (1QS 3.4; 4.21) is tied to purification from sin (see also Isaiah 1:16; Ezekiel 36:25). Members of the community are enjoined as follows: "He should not go into the waters to share in the pure food of the men of holiness, for one is not cleansed unless one turns away from one's wickedness, for he is unclean among all the transgressors of his word" (1QS 5.13-14, and see also 3.4-9).

all the abhorrences of deceit and (from) the defilement of the unclean spirit” (1QS 4.20-22).

The characterization of man as a creature who has been defiled by the dominion of Belial paves the way for a doctrine of mankind as inherently sinful and errant — a doctrine that plays a central role both in the hymn appended to the Manual of Discipline and in the Hodayot.³³ Man is no longer a creature that has become defiled, but “human uncleanness” (1QS 11.14-15) and “a sin of flesh” (1QS 11.12).³⁴ These are the congenital conditions of one born of woman: man is “a creature of clay, fashioned with water, a foundation of shame and a source of impurity, an oven of iniquity and a building of sin, a spirit of error and depravity without knowledge” (1QH^a 9.21-23); a base creature, innately governed by its sinful urges for “every impure abomination and guilt of unfaithfulness” (1QH^a 19.11); a “structure of dust fashioned with water . . . shame of dishonor and source of impurity . . . and a depraved spirit rules over him” (1QH^a 5.21-22); “he is in iniquity from his maternal womb, and in guilt of unfaithfulness right to old age” (1QH^a 12.30). Disgust and revulsion in the face of man’s nature, as well as disdain for human society, are typical of those who would negate the world and flee from it, and it is to this category that the Qumran community clearly belongs.

The scrolls posit an unbridgeable gap between mankind and God, for “To you, God of knowledge, belong all the works of justice and the foundation of truth; but to the sons of Adam belong the service of iniquity and the deeds of deception” (1QH^a 9.26-27). Is there, then, a path of salvation for mankind from its own base and sinful nature? The members of God’s elect

33. In addition to these sources, there is one mention in the Damascus Document of the enemies having “defiled themselves with human sin and unclean paths” (CD 3.17).

34. The word ‘flesh’ (בשר) regularly refers in the Hodayot to man *qua* material creature who cannot be the agent of his own salvation. This sense appears to derive from biblical Hebrew, where בשר refers, *inter alia*, to the human body, and כל בשר (‘all flesh’) is all living creatures. There are also a number of biblical verses that could cause a religious doctrine that disdains human nature to adopt the term as a designation of man’s corporeality and material being, for “evil belongs to humankind, to the assembly of the unfaithful flesh” (1QS 11.9). Among these verses are: “My [= God’s] breath shall not abide in man forever, since he too is flesh” (Gen. 6:3), “all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth” (Gen. 6:12), “in God I trust, I am not afraid, what can flesh do to me?” (Ps. 56:5), “He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breath that does not return” (Ps. 78:39), and others like these. Paul’s use of ‘flesh’ is identical to that found in the Hodayot (see, e.g., “the sin of the flesh” [1QS 11.12] and Romans 8:3), so this sense should be seen not as a Pauline innovation but rather a stage in the semantic development of the biblical term in certain Jewish circles. It is worth noting that the War Scroll usually employs the term to refer to the war cadavers, while the special sense of ‘flesh’ is unattested in this document.

community know “that there is hope for someone you fashioned out of dust for an everlasting community. The depraved spirit you have purified from great offense” (1QH^a 11.20, and see also 6.6; 9.14). God lifts up the man who desires him from his base destiny and purifies him of “the uncleanness of human being and from the sin of the sons of man” (1QS 11.14-15). This is done by bestowing upon man the divine spirit, for “the path of man is not secure except by the spirit which God creates for him” (1QH^a 12.31). Indeed, God elevates his elect from the baseness of man to the sublime heights of the angels: “For the sake of your glory, you have purified man from offense, so that he can make himself holy for you from every impure abomination and guilt of unfaithfulness, to become united with the sons of your truth and in the lot with your holy ones, to raise the worms of the dead from the dust, to an everlasting community and from a depraved spirit to your knowledge, so that he can take his place in your presence with the perpetual host and the spirit . . . to renew him with everything that will exist and those who know in a community of jubilation” (1QH^a 19.10-14). Needless to say, not all people are granted the gift of purifying spirit. The dualistic doctrine of Qumran asserts that only part of humanity has been elected to be counted among the righteous — and that part of humanity that God has chosen to purify of their defilement and sin is, of course, the members of the Yahad themselves.

Man is “a creature of clay fashioned with water” (1QH^a 9.21) and “unfaithful flesh” (1QS 11.9), and only the gift of spirit can purify and redeem him. There is, then, a dichotomy between the material element of human existence and the purifying spirit. Yet it should be noted that there has not yet been found in the scrolls an explicit contrast between materiality as such — or the material world — and the spiritual realm of the divine, a division that typifies a strand of Greek thought beginning with Plato and down through the various Gnostic movements.³⁵ The scrolls do not negate the world as such. True, the Manual of Discipline asserts that the world “has been defiled in paths of wickedness during the dominion of injustice” (1QS 4.19), but it is not inherently a source of impurity. God established it as the place for the spirits of light and darkness (1QS 4.2), and even “created man to rule the world” (1QS 3.17-18). Moreover, the wondrous secrets of creation and the immutable laws governing the universe are proof of God’s greatness and singular will (1QH^a 9.7-20). Indeed, these laws of righteousness only serve to highlight the nullity of mankind (1QH^a 9.21-27).

35. It should be noted that up to now I have not found in the scrolls any identification of the lot of light with life and of evil with death, a correspondence attested both in pagan religions and in the early church.

The view expressed in the Hodayot and the Manual of Discipline, according to which man is a base, defiled and impure creature, is organically tied to the passive version of divine predestination. According to this doctrine, everything is determined in advance solely according to God's will, this being the sole source of all being, for "by his knowledge everything shall come into being, and all that does exist he establishes with his calculations and nothing is done outside him" (1QS 11.11). Thus, God has foreordained a particular individual to be righteous and one of God's elect, since from "[God's] hand is the perfection of the path" (1QS 11.10-11). It appears, then, that by the Community's account, man's corrupt nature prevents him from becoming righteous through his own agency, for man is a creature of "evil and unfaithful flesh" (1QS 11.9), and his works are bereft of value. Man is a base creature, helpless to raise himself up if not for God's will: "I am dust and ashes, what can I plan if you do not wish it? What can I devise without your will? How can I be strong if you do not make me stand? How can I be learned if you do not mould me?" (1QH^a 18.5-7). When God's unique and absolute will decides to elevate one of his elect from the guilt and defilement that is otherwise his lot, when God decides to bridge the yawning chasm that divides him from helpless mankind, this divine judgment is not contingent upon human merit — for indeed there is no such thing — but rather upon the mercy and grace of the beneficent deity: "I know that no one besides you is just. I have appeased your face by the spirit which you have placed in me, to lavish your kindnesses on your servant forever, to purify me with your holy spirit, to bring me near by your will according to the extent of your kindnesses" (1QH^a 8.19-21). The elect's knowledge that he has been blessed with God's grace, fills him with confidence and provides him with inner fortitude: "But when I remembered the strength of your hand and the abundance of your compassion³⁶ I remained resolute and stood up; my spirit kept firmly in place in the face of affliction. For I leaned on your kindnesses and the abundance of your compassion. For you atone iniquity and cleanse man of his guilt through your justice" (1QH^a 12.35-37). The doctrine of man's election through preordained divine grace seeks to clarify the means by which an individual merits becoming one of the elect. It is a doctrine that reflects a religious sensibility that is concerned with individual salvation, which apparently dominated the

36. "The abundance of your compassion," which appears in the holiday *musaf* liturgy, is an ellipsis of "your heart and your compassion" in Isaiah 63:15. The Greek translator of Isaiah understood **הַמֶּוֹן** as *πληθος*, and so too in the scrolls we find **הַמֶּוֹן רַחֲמִים** paralleling **סְלִיחוֹת רַבּוֹב**. This Hebrew phrase was translated similarly in the Epistle to the Ephesians (1:7): *πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ*. Both 1QH and Ephesians use **הַמֶּוֹן רַחֲמִים** as a definition of the divine grace through which God designates His elect.

Yahad at that time. According to this doctrine, the Community is the sum total of all the individual elect: “All the sons of your truth you bring to forgiveness in your presence, you purify them from their offences by the greatness of your goodness, and by the abundance of your compassion, to make them stand in your presence for ever and ever. For you are an eternal God and all your paths remain from eternity” (1QH^a 15.29-32). And similarly: “For I know that shortly you will raise a survivor among your people, a remnant in your inheritance. You will purify them to cleanse them of guilt. For all their deeds are in your truth and in your kindness you judge them with an abundance of compassion and a multitude of forgiveness. According to your mouth you teach them, and according to the correctness of your truth, to establish them in your council for your glory” (1QH^a 14.7-10). The Community, which is the only path to salvation, is not only the natural framework that encompasses all of God’s elect; adherence to the Yahad and observance of its laws are a necessary condition of redemption. Thus, membership in this fellowship of grace is itself one of the gracious acts that God has bestowed upon his chosen ones: “You, you alone, have created the righteous man . . . to keep your covenant” (1QH^a 7.17-18). Indeed, the elect’s recognition that it is the purifying holy spirit that beats in his heart as he is elevated “from a depraved spirit to Your knowledge” (1QH^a 19.12), as well as the exoteric and esoteric doctrines of the Community — to which the members wholly devote themselves — all these are gracious acts of a beneficent God toward his elect: “And your compassion for all the sons of your approval, for you have taught them the basis of your truth, and have instructed them in your wonderful mysteries” (1QH^a 19.9-10). In other words, the Community itself played a central role in the doctrine of God’s gracious salvation of man. This doctrine is of course not contrary to the accepted views within the Yahad regarding the cosmic role of the “community of God” in the processes that govern the universe, from its inception to its ultimate end, nor to the notion that the members of the Community will be handsomely rewarded in the end of days for their fidelity to the Yahad.

The teaching that it is predestined divine grace that elevates one from the human impurity posits a sharp opposition between the vast majority of mankind, that is doomed, on the one hand, and the small number of elect who have been purified. Humanity is divided along a horizontal line, with a small group of individuals elevated above it through the will of God. This dichotomy is essentially different from the vertical division of the two camps facing off against one another — the lot of God and the lot of Belial, the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness — which is one of the key teachings of the War Scroll and of the Manual of Discipline. The Hodayot are aware of this division as well (see, e.g., 1QH^a 7.17-32; 6.18-20), albeit in a much weaker form,³⁷

as the doctrine of the individual's election out of the defiled state of mankind moves front and center. It is possible that the two doctrines of election are not, from a conceptual point of view, mutually exclusive, and thus may be found in conjunction.³⁸ Another possibility is that the Qumranites reconciled the two doctrines by assuming that all of humanity is the lot of Belial, judging by its crooked ways, whereas only those purified of the "sins of mankind" are of the lot of light.

The scrolls published thus far bear witness to three distinct stages in the Dead Sea Community's doctrinal development. First, the division of the world into two hostile factions and the doctrine of predestination, which together served as the basis for bellicose activism (the War Scroll). Second, though the sect does not abdicate its activism altogether, it does postpone the destruction of the wicked to the more distant future and endorse a conditional pacifism. Their hatred of the surrounding society becomes "everlasting hatred . . . in the clandestine spirit," as they maintain a façade of slavish submission to the regnant world order. This new position is based on a doctrine of divine predestination in its passive version: since the "ultimate end" has not yet come, members of the Yahad must not rebel against the will of God, but rather refrain from taking any action against the wicked (Manual of Discipline, Hodayot). Finally, there emerges a doctrine of man's predestined election out of a divine grace. This doctrine is based on the regnant views of the Yahad, that mankind is inherently defiled and sinful, and that the passive doctrine of predestination indicates that all human action is ultimately rooted in God's will (Hodayot, the hymn appended to the Manual of Discipline). It appears, then, that after the political conditions of the day forced the Community to relinquish its activist approach, they adapted their teachings to the new reality and settled for a hidden hatred toward surrounding society, while nursing a hope for their eventual triumph. In time, however, the sect became enclosed within itself, turned away from the great masses of humanity that are steeped in the "impurity of man, the sinfulness of mankind." Its members immersed themselves in the doctrine of man's election through divine grace, a doctrine that showed them the way to their personal salvation.

37. It should be noted that "Belial" designates an angel of darkness in the War Scroll and in the Manual of Discipline, but 'something bad, a transgression' in the hymn appended to 1QS and in the Hodayot. This meaning is also reflected in the Septuagint, and see Flusser, "The Apocryphal Book of *Ascensio Isaiae* and the Dead Sea Sect," *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, 5, n. 6.

38. Indeed, the same two doctrines are attested in primitive Christianity. I hope to show elsewhere that their roots are in the Dead Sea Community, or affiliated circles.