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Dead Sea Scrolls and Early Christianity: BIB 330 (NO)

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Online Discussion 7 - DEAD SEA WISDOM LITERATURE

- 1. What are the differences and similarities between Matthew, Luke and 4Q525 above?** In Matthew, Luke and 4Q525, there are some differences and similarities. Of all three, the gospel according to Matthew is the most extensive and detailed, since the writer covers everything from being “poor in spirit” to being mistreated for Godliness’ sake. If we were to number the areas he addressed, it would be eight areas in all. For those who believe in biblical numerology like I do, eight is the number of new beginnings, a refreshing new start. It is almost as if Matthew sees this teaching moment with Jesus as a recharge to his walk with Him.

Luke’s interpretation of the Beatitudes focuses on three aspects of the Christian experience and they are being poor, hungry and persecuted. I have learned as a long-time salesperson that it is wisest to present only three options to my customer to avoid buyer’s confusion. Proper focus encourages purchasing. Too many choices will cause the purchaser to walk away. It is amazing how people can be at the same event, such as the Sermon on the Mount, hear the same message, but take away from it that which appeals to them.

In 4Q525, its content is somewhat different. The main focus seems to rigidly be on wisdom and “the law of the Most High;” no other aspects of the life of a Christian. Nevertheless, everything documented in all three writings are wise, in that they help the believer to live life skillfully. Most importantly, the idea of maltreatment, or persecution, for those who choose to live Godly seems inevitable and common in all three texts. Each writer spends a significant amount

of time on it, bringing comfort to us by saying that it is an undeniable part of the Christian experience.

- 2. Is there some difference or similarity between the Gospels and the dead sea scrolls that indicates a relationship or a lack thereof?** There is a similarity between the Gospels and the Dead Sea Scrolls that indicate a relationship. They bring comfort to its believers in hard times. They remind us that troubles come, whether it be 2,000 years ago or today. But, a reward for diligence in keeping the faith and adhering to wisdom will come too.