

Zachary Wong

Dr. Jeffery Garcia

BIB460 Dead Sea Scrolls

28 March 2023

Week 10: Divine Determinism

Divine Determinism, or predestination, or hyper-Calvinism(for Christians) is the focus of this week's primary readings. There is little doubt that the Qumran sect saw themselves as the "Chosen" sons of light, readings from 1QS (Community Rule) and 1QH^a (Thanksgiving Hymns) provide insight to Qumran theology. These texts have intriguing parallels in another Second Temple Period text, the letters of Paul. This short report shall survey these primary texts and list the commonalities.

1QS consists of the so-called "The Treatise of the Two Spirits" (3:15-4:26). The passage makes a comparison between individuals under two "spirits" that are at polar opposite(at least according to the Qumran Sect). Those that are outside the community are called the generations of deceit, and their source is one of darkness. The darkness has dominion over the Sons of Deceit and all the iniquities, sins and guilt of the Sons of Light all stem from the same darkness. The treatise continues contrasting the two groups. The climax is where the author of the text reveals that the Sons of Deceit are to be condemned by the Divine:

"God, in the mysteries of his knowledge and in the wisdom of his glory, has determined

an end to the existence of injustice and on the appointed time of the visitation he will obliterate it forever. (1QS 4:18-19)

1QH^a 7:25-33 provides a different aspect of Qumran determinism, albeit similar in theology, but in a different context. Comprising a hymn of praise, 1QH^a praises God for divine choice. God's total control and dominion over all is clearly at the top of the picture so to speak, as the writer describes God having organized one's spirit and task intended. This passage seems to describe the God planned life of an individual, probably one of the "Sons of Light".

It is intriguing that some of this "Dualism" as noted by Flusser, occurs in Pauline writings(216). Flusser quotes Romans 9:22-23 as an example of Paul's dualistic determinism.

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory
(Romans 9:22-23)

Here we can clearly see "vessels prepared for destruction" and "vessels of mercy" that God had both prepared. According to Flusser, this is exactly the reason for predeterminism(221), which he finds parallels in Qumranic writings.

Dualistic overtones can also be heard in Romans 8. V1-11 speaks of flesh and spirit. Paul clearly parallels sin(and death) with flesh and spirit connected to life. He then states those of

flesh can not please God but those in spirit, God dwells in them(v8-9). The Pauline dualism is not too far apart from Qumranic notions that contrast the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness discussed above.

All in all, although not directly parallel, early Christian writings reflect influence by the Qumran/Dead Sea sect. Or as Flusser cautions, there was probably a median group that transmitted Qumranic thought to a certain stratum of early Christians (216) and these parallels deserve further investigation.

Works Cited

Flusser, David. "The Dead Sea Sect and Pre-Pauline Christianity." *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1965, pp. 215-66.