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Determinism and The 1QS (Community Rule) 3:15-4:26 and 1QHa 7:25-33

(Thanksgiving Hymns).

For the purpose of this writing and in view of the concept of determinism, a comparison was made of two dead sea scrolls findings: the 1QS (Community Rule) 3:15-4:26 and 1QHa 7:25-33 (Thanksgiving Hymns). The Community Rule (1QS), also known as the Manual of Discipline or the Rule of the Congregation was discovered in Cave 1, however fragments of the text have been also found in Caves 4 and 5. The Community Rule describes the organization, regulations, and beliefs of a community of the religious group who lived at Qumran and awaited the end of days.

On the other hand, 1QHa constitutes one of the manuscripts of the Hodayot (Thanksgiving Hymns) that was discovered in Cave 1 at Qumran. The 1QHa a collection of poetic compositions centered on the goodness of God and thus that express thanksgiving and praise to Him for His deliverance and guidance. It has been observed that these poems are attributed to the Teacher of Righteousness, the founding figure of the Qumran community, and are significantly a product of his personal experiences and spiritual insights. 1QHa is also regarded as the largest and best-preserved manuscript of the Hodayot, containing 28 columns of text.¹

A further analysis of the Community Rule text reveals a broad theme of determinism. Firstly, it talks about two spirits with their followers; the good spirit and the bad/evil spirit. The good spirit is of the light, and the evil spirit is of darkness. The concept of determinism comes

¹ Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1: 95.

becomes bear in the text when it seems to imply that God was the one who appointed the two spirits and to govern all of humanity until the time of the final judgement when He would judge unto condemnation the spirit of darkness and his followers, while also judging unto salvation the spirit of light and his followers. In view of justifying this righteous judgment of God, the texts also reveal the qualities and works that characterize each spirit and their respective lot.

With regards to Christianity and the bible, there is but a slight similarity. The biblical text, Deuteronomy 30:15-20, gives the option for a choice between life and death, good and evil, blessing and curse. But the Community Rule depicts this choice in a more deterministic and dualistic way, placing more focus on God's predestination of human fate and the cosmic conflict between light and darkness.

Perhaps, one similarity with the bible is that there are indeed two spirits that govern all of humanity. There is the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, keeping them in blindness from the gospel and leading them to do more of the unfruitful works of darkness. Then there is the Holy Spirit that is walking in the children of light to believe in Jesus and do the will of God. The children of light walk no more after the flesh or their fallen nature but by this Spirit of God. At the time of judgement, those of the Spirit of God would be rewarded with eternal life and the kingdom of God, but those of the spirit of darkness would be judged with that spirit by being eternally banished from the kingdom of God and eternally condemned to a place of torment. However, unlike the Community Rule text which talks about the good spirit being judged, the bible and Christian theology sees the good Spirit as God Himself and hence is the Spirit of the judgement who himself cannot be judged.

On the other hand, though the Thanksgiving Hymns does not express the concept of determinism as vividly as it was done in the Community Rule, there are aspects of the Hymns

that could be construed as displaying deterministic theology. For instance, the Hymns can be said to show determinism in the way that it shows God's absolute power and wisdom, his creation and providence. The song writer in the hymn seems to draw attention to his total depravity and the sovereignty of God in the midst of it all.

In conclusion, the question of divine determinism and human freedom has been a perennial issue in Christian theology, especially in relation to the interpretation of certain Pauline texts that employ concepts such as foreknowledge, election, mystery, and predestination (e.g., Rom 8; 1 Cor 2; Eph 1). Calvinist theologians have traditionally appealed to these texts to support various forms of determinism, ranging from the supralapsarian view that God has unconditionally decreed the eternal destiny of each individual before the creation of the world, to the infralapsarian view that God has conditionally elected those whom he foreknew would exercise faith and repentance. However, these interpretations have been challenged by alternative readings that emphasize the corporate, historical, and eschatological dimensions of Paul's language and thought. The debate over the meaning and implications of these texts continues to be a lively and contentious one among scholars and students of Pauline theology.

Referemces

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