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Dead Sea Scrolls

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### Sin/Righteousness of God and the Dead Sea Scrolls

The subjects of sin and righteousness permeate all aspects of most religious texts and more especially the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. These massive materials on sin and righteousness show the nature of their weightiness. The first account of sin is in the book of Genesis; even though sin and rebellion was in the world prior to Adam's sin, sin was not officially part of the human race and hence not legally in the world since that world was under the dominion of sinless humanity. It was until the serpent was able to deceive the Eve and subsequently get Adam to rebel against the word of God, that sin got officially introduced to world. The ten commandments and the whole law of Moses came to make sin clear, or to bring it to the light, but sin did not even need the written law to be sin for Romans 1 revealed that this law of God was already written into the hearts of people; their conscience either condemning them or excusing them. However, God is perfectly righteous and has made a way for humanity to share in his righteousness. The rest of this paper would be an exploration of sin and righteousness and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Jonathan Klaans had the chapter Impurity and Sin in the Literature of Qumran in which he focused on analyzing the Community Rule (1QS) which he described as have a major emphasis on the defiling force of sin. He further noted that "the first four notions of initiation involve not only moral repentance but also ritual purification, and instances of ritual defilement among insiders seem to be assumed to result from sin. The ritual purification of insiders involves repentance too. These notions can most clearly be seen in the Community Rule (iQS), but they

are in evidence also in the Damascus Document (CD), 'The Thanksgiving Scroll (iQH), and the Peshar Habakkuk (iQpIIab), as well as other documents" (p.9).

This analysis brought to light the complex relationship between impurity, morality, repentance and purification. Nonetheless, it showed how the sect at Qumran were serious about getting it right with God. However, just like the Pharisees of Jesus' times, this sect may have taken things too far in their estimation of human worth and what it means to be pure before God. They may have also taken too far the ways in which they thought they could repent and purify themselves for God. They were definitely seeking for the righteousness of the law by incorporating certain good deeds or rituals. One of the main passages from the Community Rule is found in VIII:i6-i8, which states: "No man of the men of the Community of the covenant of the Community, who strays from any one of the ordinances deliberately may touch the pure-food of the men of holiness nor know any of their counsel, until his works have become purified from all deceit by walking with those perfect of the Way."

This approach to obtaining purity or righteousness before God was radically challenged by the apostle Paul. Romans 3:21; Romans 4:6; 2 Corinthians 5:23, and so forth. For Paul, the law was only a revelation of the failure of humanity to be righteous. The law did not come to show people how to be righteous as much as it came to show people that they have not been righteous. The law was rather making all humanity guilty before God so that they can be humble enough to receive the righteousness that God gives.

Moreover, no one had been flawless in keeping all the demands of the law and so no one could stand perfectly righteous before God. The plan of God was hence to give that righteousness which was a free gift. It is the righteousness of God that is obtained without the deeds of the law. But how so? The obvious answer is through Jesus Christ who God made to be

sin that all who believe in Him might obtain that righteousness that is by faith alone. In Paul's theology, this was the same kind of righteousness that Abram obtained from God when he believed the word of God. Therefore is he the father to all those who believe in the God that sent Jesus Christ.

Also, to show the contrast between ceremonial purity like the one covered in many of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Paul highlighted the fact that Abraham was declared righteous by God even from before giving him the ceremony of the circumcision. The circumcision only came after as a seal of the righteousness that he had already received by faith. Thus Abram became the father of faith for both Jews and Gentiles; the circumcised and uncircumcised. The only call is to no longer live after the flesh or fallen carnal nature but to live a life directed by the Holy Spirit.

#### CONCLUSION

Indeed, just like Klawans highlighted, In the sectarian literature from Qumran, sin, morality, and purity are closely related. The sectarians believed the single concept of defilement constituted ritual and moral impurity, which had both ritual and moral ramifications. The good news according to Pauline theology is that Jesus bore upon himself the ramifications for sin that all who trust in Him and walk in the Spirit should be known as righteous.