

**Dead Sea Scrolls
The Community Rule (1QS)**

**A Presentation Paper presented to:
Professor Jeffrey Garcia**

Alliance University

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**by
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When, Where and by Whom

There is great mystery surrounding the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. One story circulating tells of the documents being discovered by a child playing who happens to enter a cave and found these large jars with lids as he wandered inside. According to Jodi Magness, in her book, *The Archeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, states, in the tenth and twelfth century, two incomplete medieval copies of the Damascus Document were found among other documents that had been placed in a repository for old books and manuscripts in the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo Egypt.¹ She continues with the account of the documents being found by the Bedouins in the winter of 1946-47 in Cave 1. It was said they found quite a few of these bowl shaped lidded cylindrical jars, one such jar had three scrolls within it wrapped in linen. Because they were in jars wrapped in linen, the scrolls were complete and well preserved.

Along with the Damascus Document, the Community Rules (the manual of discipline for the Yahad), the complete book of Isaiah and quite a few other books, seven in total, were found in great condition written on parchment. The most popular parchment used back then which happens to also preserve well was sheep skin.² Even those these were said to be in great condition, the scrolls are very delicate and are mainly found in large or small fragments that has been gently pieced back together in order to be able to read them to determine which work they belong to.³

What can you know about the scribes?

¹ Chapter 2 - The Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, page 27

² Anava et al., Illuminating Genetic Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Cell Article (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2020.04.046>, page 3

³ T&T Clark companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls, Chapter 3, The manuscript Collections: An Overview, Mladen Popovic, page 38

Scholars believe the scrolls dated from the Hellenistic-Roman period, which would be around the late Second Temple Period, which is third century B.C. E. to the first century CE.⁴ There seems to be evidence that the scrolls were created and formed gradually by many generations of scribes, who authored, transmitted. Because of so many speculations of how they were found and not much still not known about the area of Qumran, there is no sure indication that the original scrolls or any of the other scrolls, were written at the actual site at that time. We do have evidence of desks or writing stations in the community area at the Qumran site where they would gather to eat and fellowship. It is possible that some of the books were copied and preserved there. Because the scrolls are the oldest known copies of the Hebrew Bible, it is possible they took the originals with them from Jerusalem when they decided to separate themselves. Since the scrolls are of the Hebrew Bible, we can safely assume that the scribes would be very careful of copying the text just like they would for a scroll they were writing to be used in the Synagogue.

Based on the Community Rules, 1QS - the Manual of Discipline, the Yadad community, This manual would be considered Rule Literature⁵. This new genre would fall under the monastic tradition. They were very strict and were said to be the ones who left Jerusalem after the fall of the Hasmonaean period. They were the last of the priest who were not happy with the new ways of the land and decided that they would leave (separate themselves) and be the upholders of the law. They called themselves the sons of Zadok (after Zadok the Priest in the Old Testament), and the Sons of Light. They were very ritualistic as far as purity (Miqva'ot) and

⁴ Cell Document above. Page 1

⁵ <http://dss.collections.imj.org>. At this time, rule literature was a new genre, which would later become part of the Christian monastic tradition.

purification practices were prevalent in the Manual and the surround areas of Qumran. They believed in Determinism and Predestination. They believed everything happened the way it did because God ordered for it to go that way down to the very breath we take when we take it and how we take it. Even though we have free will, they believed God controlled and foreknew every step we would take. Josephus stated they like to leave all things to God.⁶ There is no way around anything because God's hand is in it. They also believed in dual nature or two spirits. You were either a Son of Light or of the Son of Darkness.

Even though the Children of Israel were given the law and the commandments and followed the Torah (to the best of their ability) they always fell short and did what they wanted to do, usually everything God warned them not to do when they were in the Wilderness before they crossed the Jordan to their promised land. This way of living just did not seem to fit the lifestyle of the other Jewish world that we know in the Old Testament. Even as far down as the Hellenistic era under Alexander the Great, they were easily persuaded to do what the other nations were doing around them. They accepted their customs gladly and mingled them together with their custom of serving Yahweh. They knew the Shema, but they refused to practice the Shema. (Deut 6:4)

A lot of the text we read in the Community rules on various topic sound like the Old Testament, and then we have some thoughts on charity, righteousness, law and sin that sounds like what Paul was teaching in the epistles of Romans, 1st Corinthians and Galatians. The law given by God to Moses to the people never changed, if these Essenes, or the Sons of Light were actually from Jerusalem and decided to separate themselves in an act of sanctity to the Law, and

⁶ Determinism handout, page 194

to the monotheism approach of serving only one God as in the days Moses, then it should all sound the same because it is from the same source. As we see in 1QS 5.1, in all that they are doing, they are not just holding fast to the law, but to the actual covenant that was made with them by God.

In Conclusion, many of the books found in the Dead Sea Scrolls mirror back to the Book of Psalms, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Genesis, and some of the epistles of Paul especially the Book of Romans. Even though their terminology may be slightly different (Professor Garcia would say they were very harsh how they called everyone dirt) they actually are not lying. They are not saying anything that God did not say. We were made from the dust of the ground, and Paul also said our best behavior would still be seen as filthy rags in the sight of God. Their thoughts may have been more rigid than how we are accustomed to trying to live up to which is why Jesus came and became our Savior, but if we really read the Old Testament especially Deuteronomy, God was clear as to how He wanted us to live, and He didn't leave much wiggle room. He also said what He said, and He said if you don't obey you will surely fall into error. I think these Sons of Zadok had finally come to their senses and were tired of being run over and destroyed because they nation simply would not follow the commandments and they knew God was their only source of hope of surviving. Today we still need God. It is only by His grace and His mercy that we are not consumed like in the days of the Old Testament and in the 400-year Intermediate Period with the rise of the Alexanders, and Ptolemies that would come and take the nation into a downward spiral. The Hasmonaeans had a run but would as well come to an end. With that, I think it is no surprise that the scrolls were preserved to show us that the Word of God was, still

is, and yet to come. I think it is honorable for them to have tried to really live the book of the Law and be separated from sin just like God intended them to be.