

The Qumran/DSS Group within Late 2nd Temple Judaism

- Contemporary scholars often refer to “Judaisms” rather than Judaism of the late 2nd Temple period (1st century CE) to give recognition to the tremendous diversity that could broadly come under the umbrella of “Jews” and “Judaism”
- The classic division of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots is much shaped by the accounts of Josephus, and the polemics in the Synoptic Gospels and requires considerable qualification.
- Most often Jesus is slotted with the Pharisees, Essenes, or Zealots. Contemporary understanding of the Mishnah, as well as the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, has added immensely to our understanding.

Classical Sources on Essenes: Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 13 & 18; *Jewish War* 2; Philo, *Every Good Man is Free* 75-91; *Hypothetica* 11; Pliny *Natural History* 5.

Pinpoint Questions:

1. Are the Scrolls connected to the site of Qumran?
2. Is the group that wrote the scrolls one known or unknown to us from other sources?

“Enochian Judaism” 1 Enoch, Jubilees, Testament of Twelve Patriarchs
Contrast: Wisdom of Solomon & Ben Sirach

Profile of the group that wrote the scrolls:

Apocalyptic, Preparing the Way, Messianic, New Covenant, Baptizing, Separationist, Communal Living

1)“This the time for the preparation of the way into the wilderness” (1QS 9) “From the day of the gathering in of the Teacher of the Community until the end of all the men of war who deserted to the Liar there shall pass about 40 years” (CD(B) 2)

2)“They shall separate from the habitation of unjust men and shall go into the wilderness to prepare there the way of Him” (1QS 8)

3)“They shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel” (1QS 9)

4)“None of the men who enter the New Covenant in the land of Damascus and betray it shall be inscribed in its Book from the day of the gathering in of the Teacher of the Community until the coming of the Messiah(s) of Aaron and Israel” (CD 8)

5)“And when his flesh is sprinkled with purifying water and sanctified by cleansing water, it shall be made clean by the humble submission of his soul to all the precepts of God” (1QS 3) “They shall not enter the water to partake of the pure Meal of the saints unless they turn from their wickedness” (1 QS 5) (**Josephus**)

6)“He has commanded that a Sanctuary of men be built for Himself, that there they may send up, like the smoke of incense, the works of the Torah” (4Q174) “They shall atone for sins without the flesh of holocausts and the fat of sacrifice and prayer shall be an acceptable fragrance of righteousness” (1QS 9) (**Josephus, Philo**)

7)“All those who freely devote themselves to His truth shall bring all their knowledge, powers and possessions into the Community of God” (1QS 1) (**Josephus? Philo**)

8) Descriptive Terminology: the terms “children of light” and “children of darkness” are *only* found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the sayings of Jesus and writings of Paul—*nowhere else in all of ancient Jewish literature*.

Sharp Differences between Dead Sea Scrolls Group and Jesus Movement include such issues as:

Sabbath observance, ritual purity, women, accepting Gentiles, penal codes. So despite these thematic similarities it seems clear that the Scrolls group would have considered Jesus and his followers much too lax with their Torah interpretations (technical term is *halachah*=how various forms of Judaism observe the individual commandments of the Torah).