

JUDAISM AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

I. JUDAISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY (BC/BCE and AD/CE)

- A. First Century Judaism (= Religion of the Jews) is a Distinct Phase
 - 1. Different from religion practiced by Judeans in the OT period
 - 2. Different from Classical and Modern Judaism in many ways
 - 3. Important phase before development of “Classical” Judaism

- B. Developments of Judaism from the Post-Exilic Period to the First Century
 - 1. The Exile Led to Strict Monotheism; Cured of Idolatry Forever
 - 2. Increased Emphasis on Keeping the Law
 - 3. The Office/Role of Scribe Developed
 - 4. Offices of Monarch and Prophet Disappeared
 - 5. Emphasis on Leadership of High Priesthood
 - 6. The Sanhedrin, Jewish Religious Council, Developed
 - 7. The Development of exclusivism
 - 8. Rift with the Samaritans
 - 9. Synagogue Developed
 - 10. Theological Developments
 - a. Resurrection and afterlife
 - b. Angels and demons; Duality (God vs. Satan)
 - c. Messianic expectations

- C. Our Knowledge of First Century Judaism
 - 1. The New Testament: a hostile source?
 - 2. The “Pseudepigrapha”
 - a. Apocalyptic elements/works
 - b. Apocalyptic elements = mainstream Judaism or early Christian elements?
 - 3. Josephus: limited info; Philo: Hellenistic, non-Palestine outlook
 - 4. Rabbinical literature (late 1st century-AD 200): *is this an accurate picture of 1st century?*
 - 5. The **Qumran Scrolls**
 - a. A sectarian view? If so, then . . .
 - 1) this group is very much unique in Judaism; like early Christianity
 - 2) de Vaux and “monastic” theory is valid (Qumran = antecedent for Christianity)
 - 3) Christianity is distanced from Judaism (appealing to many mainstream Jews & Christians)
 - b. Representative of wider Judaism? If so, then . . .
 - 1) First Century Judaism was more diverse than previously believed
 - 2) Apocalypticism, eschatology, messianism: more widespread than previously believed
 - 3) Christianity developed out of Jewish forms of these ideas

II. RABBINIC JUDAISM AND LITERATURE: Post AD/CE 70

- A. Developed in the Wake of the Destruction of the Temple
 - 1. Decline of Apocalyptic and eschatological ideas (but not complete absence)
 - 2. Focus on Halakhic material (see below)
 - 3. Scholars: is this material a relevant source for 1st century Judaism?
 - a. First century rabbis are cited
 - b. But the emphasis on *halakha* may have only arisen after AD 70 (MMT shows otherwise)

- B. Presents itself (through Rabbinical Literature) as Monolithic, Unchanged

- C. Most “Rabbinical” Literature is Post- AD 70
1. Temple was Destroyed by Romans
 2. Biblical Interpretation Became More Important
 3. Emphasis on Ritual Purity and Questions of Conduct in Relation to the Law
 4. **Tannaim** (“transmitters”): Jewish Scholars from Hillel (AD 20) to Mishnah (AD 200)
- D. Two Types of Rabbinical Material
1. **Halakhah** (sometimes *Halachah*): Legal Discussions (Legal interpretations/debates)
 2. **Haggadah**: Narrative or Proclamation Material (Stories)
- E. Halakhic Writings
1. **Halakhah** (Oral Law/debates of “pairs”) systemized by **Rabbi Akiva** (also Akiba); AD 100-135
 2. **Mishnah**: codification of Oral Law by **Judah ha-Nasi** (“the Prince”); AD 175-200
 3. **Tosephta** (ca. AD 300); Halakhic “additions” to Mishnah; same org./structure; not “canonical”
 4. **Gemarah**: Aramaic commentary on Mishnah
 5. **Talmud**: Mishnah + Gemarah in standard printed form
 - a. **Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud** (*Yerushalami*) about AD 400
 - b. **Babylonian Talmud** (*Bavli*); about AD 600
- F. **Midrash** = “Investigation”
1. Biblical Commentaries in Narrative Form; generally Haggadic in nature
 2. Often Includes Additional/Legendary Material

III. SPECIFIC AREAS OF IMPACT OF THE SCROLLS

- A. Apocalypticism, Messianism, Eschatology
1. Definitions
 - *Messianism*: deliverer will establish kingdom; lead to better future
 - *Apocalypticism*: God Intervenes in History on the side of Faithful Minority; Sudden, Cataclysmic Events
 - *Eschatology*: doctrine of “last things”
 2. Sectarian or representative of Judaism? (see above)
 3. Messianic Ideas: multiple Messiahs
 - a. Davidic/Royal Messiah = “Messiah of Israel” (1QS 9.11)
 - b. Aaronic/Priestly Messiah: precedence over royal Messiah (in Hebrews, Jesus is both)
 - c. the Prophet: a prophetic Messiah? an Elijah figure? (in Jn 6:14; 7:37, Jesus combines them)
- B. Emphasis on Ritual Purity
1. Odd combination with Apocalypticism
 2. A general hallmark of the times in Judaism?
- C. Calendars and Festivals
1. Emphasis on solar calendar; competing systems?
 2. Previously unknown festivals (esp. from Temple Scroll)
- D. Canon
1. Three-fold view of scripture (MMT)
 2. Possible acceptance of additional books: Temple Scroll, Jubilees, 1 Enoch
- E. Biblical Interpretation: *peshirim* (Qumran) and *midrash* (Qumran + Rabbinical)
- F. Impact on Assessment/Positioning of Various Jewish Groups

IV. JEWISH SECTS OR IDENTIFICATIONS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

- A. Known sects represent a variety of “Judaisms;” determined by views of various issues
1. Understanding of role of God’s control of world: absolute control, intervening, or remote?
 2. Understanding of Man: predetermined or free will?
 3. Understanding of the Torah: sufficient in itself (literal Torah only) or to be extrapolated/expanded (halakhic expansion/”oral law”)?
 4. Understanding of the Cosmos: dualistic (angels/demons) or not?
 5. Understanding of Time: temporal (no afterlife) or eternal (resurrection)?
 6. Understanding of History: cyclical or linear (apocalypticism, eschatology, messianism)?
- B. Working Matrix of Jewish Identifications and views on above issues

Issue↓ \ Group→	Qumran*	Sadducees	Pharisees	Essenes ^a	Christianity
Constituency	dispossessed	wealthy	common	dispossessed	all
God’s control	absolute	remote	intervening	absolute	intervening?
Man	predetermined	free will	free will	predetermined	free will?
Torah	sufficient	sufficient	extrapolated	?	extrapolated
Cosmos	dualistic	non-dualistic	dualistic	dualistic?	dualistic
Time	eternal?	temporal	eternal	?	eternal
History	linear	cyclical	linear	?	linear

*taken as a whole—across all texts ^aas known from Classical, non-Qumran sources ? = not certain, varying, or unknown

C. Sadducees

1. Origin: Hasmonean aristocracy; a party of High Priests & powerful families
2. Controlled **Temple/High Priesthood** (and Sanhedrin)
3. Desired the status quo (since they held the power); favored by wealthy
4. Theologically Rigid; “conservative”
 - a. accepted **Torah only** (rejected Oral Law totally)
 - b. rejected new ideas, theological “innovations”
 - c. tended toward literal interpretation
5. Disappeared with Destruction of the Temple in AD 70

D. Pharisees

1. Origin: Emerged after Maccabean Revolt from Hasidim, or “pious ones”
2. **TORAH**: Adherence to the Law of Moses
 - a. Associated with **Scribes** (Professional Group)
 - b. Became Interpreters of Scripture
 - c. **Synagogue** leaders: favored by the common people
3. **TRADITION**: Adherence to the **Oral Law** (= “Traditions of the Elders”)
 - a. The Written Law Does Not Cover Every Situation
 - b. Oral Law Bridged Gap by Applying Law to New Situations
 - c. Development: see “Halakhic Writings,” above (II.E)
4. Progressive; Receptive to New Ideas, “liberal”
5. Survived the first century; became the foundational approach for all modern Judaism

E. Essenes

1. Major question: = Qumran sect?
2. Either way: did not survive after AD 70

G. Early Christianity

1. A development from Judaism
2. Survived and flourished after AD 70, but as a non-Jewish identification