

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Introduction to Biblical Studies, Session 12, Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls

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This is Dr. Elaine Phillips in her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 12, Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Earlier on in our study together, we talked briefly about the location of Qumran.

We talked about it particularly in regard to the community or perhaps communities who left the Jerusalem establishment, whatever it happened to be in the middle of the second century BC, and moved out to the area in the northwest corner of the Dead Sea. What we're going to do right now is pick up on that very brief mention because we want to focus on Dead Sea Scroll texts. And one of the first things to say as we look at this is to acknowledge that we're talking about a wide range of disciplines that come into our study, what's going on here.

Even by virtue of what's on the screen in front of you, you see a text. And it's a text that has a particular orthography that characterizes the writings that come out of that particular community. But this text was discovered in a very unique set of circumstances that are going to take us back to the middle of the 20th century.

So, all that to say that we need to be thinking about history in terms of the origins of these texts and the community or communities that produced them. We need to be thinking about archaeology as the texts continue to be discovered. And we also need to be thinking about geography and the location where these texts were.

Add to that another focus of history which is going to be our recent 20th century history. Because quite frankly the story of the discovery of these texts is as interesting as just about any cloak and dagger narrative that you could pursue. So that's the direction we're going to go as we try and pull some of this together as I've called an interdisciplinary study.

First of all, you know, why all the fuss? Well, let's look at a couple of things that contribute to the fact that Qumran and Dead Sea Scrolls studies have really been in the front and center of an awful lot of academic discussion since about the middle of the 1900s. Here are some reasons. Without question, for reasons I hope will be clear by the time we get through this, this has been really the most significant archaeological discovery of the 20th century.

Without question and I hope the reasons will be evident if not right away as we move on through our hour. One of the things it does is to give us a sense of the Judaism in Jesus' day. And I have Judaism in plural here because sometimes when

we think of Judaism we leave it singular and we keep it as a monolith and we really don't want to be doing that.

We have a multiplicity of ways of expressing that religion, not just in the first century but certainly in Jesus' day. And what's going on at Qumran and even there are the different things that we see as part of that sociological religious picture will help us a good deal understand that there's a lot of richness to the culture even in our small little land between. This third point is perhaps a bit debated amongst various and sundry people, but I'm going to suggest as we go on that John the Baptist, who as you may remember was born into a family, both of whom were priests, both of whom were elderly, probably were going to die relatively soon.

And we learned that John the Baptist drew up in the wilderness and we also learned that once he started his ministry he was baptizing in the Jordan River. We don't know where Aenon and Salim are, but those are the names that are mentioned. So, it doesn't take a lot of conjecture, it's conjecture admittedly, but we could possibly say that John the Baptist did have some association with these communities who withdrew from the Jerusalem priestly establishment, which in that day was not exactly a paragon of virtue in any way. Perhaps his good and godly parents sent him out of Jerusalem into a much more covenant focused community, which indeed was Qumran.

He certainly does know about immersion and he knows about baptism, he knows a strong sense of righteousness and purity and those were things as we're going to see that characterize this community. So again, that's very much a maybe, but I'm going to pose it as a possibility in terms of understanding at the end of Luke chapter 1, which does say that he was reared in the wilderness. This too is a very important point and that is that in addition to history and in addition to understanding John the Baptist, as I said, we have a very important bit of evidence from Qumran in terms of the Hebrew Bible text.

Just a quick note at this point, when we think of our manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, our earliest manuscripts came from the late 9th century AD. 895 is pretty much a date. We have the Masoretes, those were those who handed along, masar is the Hebrew verb which means to hand along, and they handed along the textual tradition, and by the way, they did it really well and extraordinarily carefully.

Don't have time to get into that but that's an important thing to keep in mind. The Ben Asher family was a key family of scribes, Masoretes, who did this kind of thing. But you know what? It was the end of the 9th century.

The question was, were they indeed preserving an accurate text? Well, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls allows us to push back by about a thousand years the nature

of the text. Are there variations? Yes, but by and large, as you can see from this, it's very very good evidence for the reliability of our Hebrew Bible text. So let's talk about our interdisciplinary approach here and think first of geography.

We want to deal with where these things were found when they were found. We'll talk about the history of their finding momentarily. We've been discussing earlier on in our study the Sea of Salt and when the scrolls were found in a series of caves, they were at the northwest corner of the Sea of Salt.

Now, just to keep in mind that we usually think of Qumran and that's going to be pretty much right about here. And we often think of that as the centerpiece for our scrolls and to be sure the 11 caves are in that area. But don't lose sight of the fact that in caves farther south, in fact, you see a little bit of En-Gedi here and there are a series of caves where other scrolls were found in this area.

So, you know what? Dry, caves, storage of scrolls. We have more than these scrolls that have been found. And in case I forget to mention it later, I'm going to say it now.

We actually have this whole idea of scrolls and caves showing up in earlier texts. We have a church father, I believe his name was Timotheus, I think we're talking 6th century, who says, oh yeah, there are scrolls and caves near Jericho. So, this is not just this one cache from one particular time.

It's certainly in the area of Judean wilderness. And we remember what that is like. We have limestone cliffs.

Limestone cliffs make for caves. We have that marl material that we were talking about when we talked about the whole area of the Jordan Valley. It's that chalky clay, lifeless combination.

But that too makes for the opportunity to create caverns within. And, in fact, a number of the scrolls were discovered in caves that were originally in marl. We'll return to that as well.

The primary water sources for people living in this area were aqueducts from hills. Just a reminder that when it rained, even though the rain was happening in this hill country area, the watershed was such that a number of times you have water gushing to the east, actually, over millions of years carving out some of those great wadis that go to the east. I'm going to talk about that a little bit more in a moment.

So yes, you have aqueducts bringing from water sources to the west, but you also occasionally have rain itself that will gush down those wadis. There are a couple of springs along here. En-Gedi would be one of them.

We've encountered that in another place called En-Feshka. But by and large, the water for these communities had to depend on some sort of aqueducting them, carrying the water from elsewhere. This gives us a little bit of a sense of these limestone cliffs.

You can see the chalk overlay, the wilderness overlay on top, but here is the rift in all of its starkness right there. Limestone cliffs and, again, caves, limestone, the two go together quite well. This is our most significant, probably, or famous photograph of the Qumran area because this is Cave 4. But unlike some of the other caves, such as Cave 1, Cave 6, Cave 11, this one is in marl, much softer material.

I'll make a couple of comments at this point about this location and about Cave 4, and we'll return to a little bit later on. If you look closely, you see the bottom of a wadi right here. This is our marl, but you look back and you're just seeing the beginnings of the limestone scarp, and there is a wadi that cuts through that.

It's called Wadi Qumran. One of the things that I want to show very shortly is a gush of water coming down through that wadi because when you do have water coming through here, it will erode this stuff. What's both sad and also leaving us in kind of a state of mystery is one has to wonder, one has to wonder over the couple of thousand of years between the time these scrolls were deposited and now, how many of these caves actually washed away? Because between the 1950s, late 40s, early 50s, when these caves were discovered, caves, what is it, 5, 7, 8, 9, and I believe 10, are gone.

They're gone. They've washed away over that 50, half-century, right, 50 years or so. And so, you have to just think, oh my goodness, how many other scrolls might have washed away in this time, because the caves in which they were stored are gone.

Don't know, left a mystery. Fortunately, Cave 4 is still here, and this is, as we're going to talk a little bit later on, this was apparently the library, I put that in quotation marks, for the Qumran community. And I'm going to give us a map in a moment and then also talk about the relationship.

This is closest to the ruin, Khirbet ruin, that was Qumran. But first of all, let's do this. I happen to have been in Israel in 2007, in the spring, when it rained.

It rained up in the hill country. Rain in May was really unusual to start with. Everybody was standing outside saying, oh, it's raining.

In fact, they said, what a flood, referring to the Hebrew word for Genesis 6 and the flood. But here's what happened in Qumran. It wasn't raining, but here's the water gushing down that wadi and coming over the waterfall and swooping right down this area.

And one can imagine, only imagine, that enough of that happened and undercut those marl terraces that you would have crumbling of those terraces and disintegration of whatever cave structure and ingredients in that cave might have been there. So just want to get a sense of that in terms of our span of history and geography and the implications of that for perhaps others' roles. We can be thankful we have the ones we have.

Well, now let's transition and talk a little bit about recent history before we move back to talking about the community itself. As I said when I started this lecture, this is cloak and dagger stuff. It's really cloak and dagger.

You've got a date, and I specifically put winter of 1947 there. Sometime February-ish, maybe March. There were some Bedouin out, particular tribe of Bedouin, and as the story goes, you know, oral traditions are very interesting, so I'm just going to say as the story goes, they're out looking for a lost sheep and somebody threw a rock, and they heard a clink, and then they heard the clink.

They thought, ooh, a treasure in a cave, and what they happened to find was not coins but scrolls. The scrolls made their way to an antiquities dealer. His short name is Kondo.

He's got a much longer name that I won't try and pronounce, but he got these first seven scrolls that got found in what's called Cave 1. As I said, we'll come back to a map in a moment. As the oral tradition goes, before he began to realize the significance of what he was holding, apparently some of these scrolls, which by the way were parchment, actually got used by shoemakers to repair shoes as well. So again, destruction of caves by natural forces, possibly destruction of some scroll materials put in some people's shoes.

As the story goes, just telling you, as the story goes, it's kind of interesting. The other thing, of course, we need to make a note of is that date, 1947, because this is right at the end of the period of the British Mandate. Things have been going south for those decades just prior to that.

The UN is dealing with whether or not they're going to intervene, and how this is going to get resolved, and what's going to happen in terms of what's called British Mandate Palestine. Because if you know the history of this period, by the time you circle from winter of 47 around to November of 1947, you've got a decision in the United Nations to partition this area. So, November 1947 is going to be a key date in terms of the scrolls material.

So, hang on to that. We'll circle back to it in a moment. In the meantime, we have in the old city of Jerusalem, the old city of Jerusalem, we have a Syrian Orthodox monastery and church.

The person who is the head of that, his name is Father Samuel. By the way, he's written a wonderful little book on his own experiences. As he comes to that monastery, makes his way through it.

He was a refugee, by the way, an orphan. So, it's a fascinating story. But he will tell the story of his own involvement in terms of having these Bedouin come to the Syrian Orthodox Church from Bethlehem with some of these scrolls.

And we notice which ones he's got. The larger Isaiah scroll, the famous rule of the community called Zeruch HaYahad, one of the interpretation Peshar texts, and then something called the Genesis Apocryphal. In this little book that he writes about his own role in it, he tells a story of how they came to the door, the gates of this church monastery complex, and they look so utterly bedraggled that the people at the door sent them away.

Fortunately, Father Samuel went after them, brought them back, and for \$100 purchased these scrolls. This, by the way, is in the old city of Jerusalem. You need to have that in mind.

The Syrian Orthodox Church is, if you go inside Jaffa Gate and you turn a little bit to the right and go down a little side street, that's where it is. That is just on the edge of the Armenian slash Jewish quarter. That is the area that was so attacked.

And basically, when the Arabs took it over, the Jews had to leave the old city. So, Father Samuel is living in a really, really tumultuous time and a really tumultuous location. Hang on to that fact.

We're going to come back to it. He gets these four scrolls. This is all good.

Take a break. This is a story. I told you it's cloak and dagger, so we have to tell it in a cloak and dagger fashion.

Here's the suspense, because now we're going to simply have a picture of Cave 1 and then a map. So let me just parse some of this out. We're going to come back and visit our site of Qumran in a moment.

Qumran is called a Khirbet, a ruin of Qumran. Here across a wadi is Cave 4. Here are the caves that have washed away in the intervening 50 years. Way up here was where the first ones were discovered.

Cave 1, then Cave 2, then Cave 3. Notice they're a little bit of a distance from the situation of Qumran itself. And so, in all honesty, there wasn't right away a sense that, oh, this is the place that produced all these scrolls. Not at all.

It took a little while to put that together. At any rate, let's continue with our discovery. Father Samuel has had those four scrolls.

He's had them in his monastery. In the meantime, we have an Israeli archaeologist who lives in the western part of Jerusalem, outside of the Old City. Keep noticing our date here.

He gets the word that there are three additional scrolls of these seven original ones. And so he goes, as the story goes, just about the last bus that he can take to Bethlehem, which is in Arab territory once the partition happens, gets these three scrolls, brings them back, and they happen to be War Scroll Thanksgiving and then Isaiah B. Scroll. Pretty much under his arm, hopping on the last bus to get from Bethlehem back into Jerusalem and Israel proper.

Before, it was no longer possible because after the UN announced the partition agreement, there was pretty much hostility and no travel back and forth. This is all very tumultuous; I can't emphasize enough the tumultuous nature of this time. So now Israel at least has those three scrolls.

Notice that he is indeed trying to purchase the four, but again, think of Israel: West Jerusalem has three, and people in what is East Jerusalem, the Old City, have four. There is a little bit of hostility in between. Instead, Father Samuel will contact the American Schools of Oriental Research, which is an institution—a very august institution—a great place just north of the Old City, the Damascus Gate of the Old City.

Father Samuel contacts them. He actually brings those four scrolls up here. The director, whose name is Harding, didn't happen to be there at the time that Father Samuel arrived with the scrolls.

So, a younger person named John Trevor took pictures of them. He's a young guy, a young scholar, but one of the wonderful things is that he photographed them right away because, for reasons I'll try to make clear, they disintegrated sadly in the basement of the Rockefeller Museum in the intervening time. So, these early photographs are tremendously important.

They're to take those particular pictures. Well, in the meantime, and again, there's a big break between bullets three and four that I'm going to fill in just a tiny bit. Father Samuel living where he lived, i.e., inside the Old City, the gate, everything's tumultuous.

1948 happens. Father Samuel again leaves Israel by the skin of his teeth and flies back to the United States with the four scrolls in his possession. For those of you who are from Massachusetts, part of the story is that those four scrolls were stored in a basement in Worcester, Massachusetts.

It's fascinating that they're kept in a safe in that basement because Father Samuel really wanted to take them on tour around the country and raise money for the Syrian Orthodox Church, which, of course, was beleaguered in the circumstances in which it existed. He wasn't terribly successful. Obviously, this was a rugged time right after World War II, etc., etc.

So, he didn't have a lot of success raising money in that fashion with these four scrolls. So eventually he comes along and posts an advertisement in the Wall Street Journal. It's a little thing, about two inches by two inches, and it's advertising in rather vague terms.

Sale of scrolls might be good for an academic institution, and you can read this as well as I can, you have Yigal Yadin buying them in 1954. Remember what the original cost was, \$100, and now \$250,000, so they do indeed come into Israel's possession, which is a wonderful thing. And by the way, that money did go to the Syrian Orthodox Church.

It wasn't that Father Samuel pocketed it in any way. Israel has these four scrolls. As you probably know, in conjunction with the Israel Museum, we now have a shrine in the book where they are housed.

It's a great place to visit. But in the meantime, that was just cave one. We have other things going on.

Clearly, as I've tried to articulate briefly to you, there's not a lot of access to this cave area, certainly not by Israeli archaeologists. So once people are able to move back into the area and do more work, it's going to be non-Israeli archaeologists. It's going to be under Jordanian control, and the people that will be doing scroll work will be from outside.

Many of them are coming from actually a monastic community type thing, all early worked under Jordanian control. In 1952, we see the discovery of caves two, three, four, and six. And four, of course, is our most important one, to which we will return shortly.

As I've already intimated, seven through ten were not in good shape at that time. Subsequently, they are gone—there are eleven caves altogether.

And here's what's fascinating. I said this already, but because of those caves were kind of spread out along the limestone scarp as well as in some of this marl area, that small little site of Qumran was not initially connected, at least in terms of the people who were watching what was going on, not initially made the connection between these scrolls. What allowed them to make that connection was this.

Because most of the scrolls, with the exception of cave four, to which we'll return, most of the scrolls were stored in jars that look just like this jar. Tall thing, as I note, some of them are as much as two feet in height, with this wonderful little cap on top. By the way, the shrine of the book at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem has as its top, if you will, a cap that shapes sort of like this, reminiscent of the discovery of these scrolls.

At any rate, scrolls were found in the caves in containers like that, and as they began excavating here at Qumran, they found jars like this as well. So that gave a good sense that what was going on in settlement of Qumran, in Khirbet Qumran, affected what was happening, or I shouldn't put it that way, what was happening, there was the place where they were producing these scrolls. I've highlighted the part there about cave four, so let me pause there for a moment.

Unlike the rest of the caves, had jars, had scrolls in the jars, cave four seems to have had shelves instead, i.e. a library in quotation marks, and these things right across the wadi from the settlement itself, these scrolls were then accessible for them to use a lot more. Obviously, in the thousand years plus that intervened, those shelves decayed, the scrolls fell down, rodents, bats, everything else along would come, and so what was found in cave four were, as you can see, lots of fragments, some of them the size of a thumb. As you may know, if you followed this story at all, there's been a lot of furor, especially between 20 years ago and 10 years ago, over the fact that these things weren't getting published.

But we need to keep in mind that when you're dealing with fragments of that number, fragments, some of which, as I said a moment ago, are indeed thumb size or maybe a little more. Fragments of text, and it's just text, and it's like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, every piece which sort of looks the same, and especially challenging for those who are dealing with scrolls that didn't have biblical text on them, so they had no idea what they said to start with. This was not an easy process to analyze this stuff.

Well, let's carry on just a little bit. I said a moment ago that in the early years of Qumran work, they didn't really take good care of some of this material, and this is a quote from Loren Schiffman's *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Let me read the quote with you and then talk a little bit more about it.

Quoting Schiffman, no attention was paid to conservation and preservation. Scholars used scotch tape, right away we're shivering at that, or gummed edges of postage stamps to attach fragments as they were being assembled. Sunlight streaming into the room bathed the ancient manuscripts leading to further decay.

Coffee cups, cigarettes, a common sight, and we can only imagine what toll they may have taken on fragile scrolls. Now, to be fair, we're talking about the early 1950s, we're talking about this area that was under Jordanian control, but none of these people had the kinds of things that we have now as we think of dealing in very expensive ways with very ancient texts. Nevertheless, as I said a moment ago, we do cringe at the prospect of scotch tape being used to put together some of these fragments.

So, just to circle back, it's a wonderful thing that those full scrolls, at least four of them, were photographed by John Trevor, in case some of that had been disintegrating as well. Well, let's move a little bit further in terms of once they made the connection between the site itself and the scrolls by virtue of these jars, then they began working a little bit more on the site. I'm not going to show you everything here, we're not going to go through the full whole historical survey, but there are some things that stand out.

First of all, they discovered a room, it's this one right here, this long room, we're standing on an observation tower looking down at this, and this long room actually had a second story to it, and in that long room, they found remnants of stuff which originally they began to identify as writing tables and or benches. I'm going to come back to that in a moment. There seems to have been a second story on top of this, and then, most importantly in terms of writing, they found an inkwell.

Now, as I note for you, it's a rare find, and the one that they do have on display is not on display, interestingly enough, in Israel, it's on display in the museum in Amman, because remember, this region was under Jordanian control when a lot of this work was being done. Let's look at that. Here's the inkwell, notice the Arabic inscription telling us what it is.

So, we have a scriptorium. By the way, scriptorium is in quotation marks. You get a little bit of a flavor of the kind of people who are working on this original material, because they use terms that are, well, they're reflective of a monastic community from which some of these scholars came.

So, you have a scriptorium, a place for writing manuscripts. You have a refectory, a place for eating together. So, they're reading monastic sensibility from their own contexts into how they were understanding Qumran as well.

Well, we do know, moving forward again into other things that we found, I shouldn't say we, they found Qumran, that this was a location that not only had this place where they did a lot of writing of texts and texts that got stored, but it also seems to have been a place that was quite intent on making sure they kept ritual purity. So here you have a water area, here you have an aqueduct or a channel, let's call it channel here, leading to that and then leading out. There were a fair number of ritual baths.

This is probably the one that you see the most because it's larger and it also has a crack through it, apparently caused by an earthquake. Again, we're dealing with a seismically active area. But a mikvah is one ritual bath, mikvahot is plural, and there were a number of them there, as I said.

You know this is what it is because there is a way for walking down into the water. There's a little divider there. And then they would immerse themselves and then walk back up here.

Lots of things to say about the process of ritual immersion and the kind of water you had to have stored in this little thing called an otzar up here that would symbolically provide sufficient pure water to make the whole ritual bath pure. At any rate, enough evidence here for ritual purification that gives us a flavor in terms of what this community might have involved. We also see the fact that they were doing communal eating here.

This is a picture I've lifted from somewhere online, so it's not my own. I didn't see all those little containers. But they found, as you can read as well as I can, over a thousand pottery vessels.

So, here's our long room, again labeled a refectory by some folks. And just out over in this area, another room that might have been sort of like a pantry maybe, where these vessels were found. In addition to that, slightly under the surface of the area right out in here, they found bones of animals.

And so, then the question, of course, is how are these being used? Are they sort of set as a sacrificial animal or were they actually eating flesh of animals? Hard to say. We're going to come back at some point later on in this lecture, or perhaps a subsequent lecture, in terms of what the texts actually help us do as they interpret some of these things. Additional finds, just to kind of keep ourselves moving through this.

There is some very sparse evidence of settlement before the first century, second and first century BC, but we won't spend time with that. What we do see are a tower or defense, significant amounts of Roman material, which fits in very well with the fact that Qumran was on the path of Roman approach. Remember in our first revolt of

the Jews against the Romans, the Romans started up north, started in Caesarea, swept across the Galilee, got Gamla, apparently came down the Jordan Valley, and Qumran was next in AD 68.

At any rate, that's why the Roman stuff is there. Also, evidence of an earthquake. How can we date this? Well, Josephus helps us with that.

There is also a fire. There do not seem to be private dwellings, which also works pretty well in terms of what we learn about these communities that lived in the Dead Sea area. This one's particularly interesting.

As this area was being excavated, still under Jordanian control, they found a burial cemetery, approximately 11,000 graves to the east of the settlement. And again, just have to say one qualifier here. If this had been excavated by Jewish scholars, there would have been a lot more concern in terms of excavating a cemetery.

But there wasn't quite that concern here. They certainly didn't dig up all of the skeletons, but the ones that they did exhume were all male skeletons. So that will be important as we interpret who these folks might have been.

Just in terms of full disclosure, there have been some female skeletons found in the vicinity of Qumran, but not within this very orderly cemetery just to the east. There's some debate in terms of exactly when, from an archaeological perspective, this settlement started. Used to be that it was dated as an archaeological site to the middle of the 2nd century BC.

Jody Magnus, one of our key archaeologists, has now said maybe we need to rethink that. Maybe the settlement started long about 100 BC. If so, then what they have done is to bring in texts and materials from earlier than that from other locations, which wouldn't be beyond the realm of possibility.

Well, of course, one of the most interesting questions that keeps coming up, and I alluded to it earlier, is, okay, how does this relate to biblical text? That's important. What do we have in terms of a community devoted to covenant? And how, then, is the biblical text reflected in that community? So here we go. It seems that approximately one-fourth of our finds were biblical texts.

So, just to kind of put this into our own contemporary way of thinking about these things, if one were to compare the libraries of Gordon College and Gordon Seminary, we would find that the number of biblical texts and biblical-related texts at Gordon Seminary was a whole lot higher than a library at Gordon College where it's a liberal arts library. So, the very fact that you've got a significant number of specifically biblical texts, and now, as we're going to see commentaries on biblical texts, we are

going to get a good sense that this is a place devoted to some form of covenant study and history. So, this elucidates some of these things.

Multiple copies of Deuteronomy, Psalms, and Isaiah. You know what? That's kind of interesting, just as an aside, because when you look at the New Testament, what are the main books that are quoted by the authors of the New Testament? Well, Deuteronomy, reflective of the Torah, Isaiah, reflective of the prophets, and then Psalms reflected in that third category there. Also, another aspect in terms of our biblical texts at Qumran is that we have fragments of everything but Esther and Nehemiah.

I know that as you read about this, sometimes you'll see that it says fragments of everything but Esther, but that's because Ezra and Nehemiah are a unit in Hebrew Bible canon thought, but there is nothing from Nehemiah here as well. I've already mentioned the fact that our dominant text type matches that of the traditional Jewish text from which we have our translations. In other words, there's a really good correspondence between what shows up in Qumran and what shows up in our Masoretic text.

Here's a bit of an aside that's worth noting. There's always an ongoing discussion about canon, specifically the canon of the Hebrew Bible and the three parts of the canon of the Hebrew Bible; I just mentioned them. Torah, prophets, and writings.

Those are the three segments. Well, there's one of the documents from Qumran, it's called 4QMMT, that by the way means it was found in cave 4. Qumran, represented by the Q, and MMT is the very short form of the Hebrew Bible title, Mixat Maaseh Torah. There are six fragments of this, and when they get put together, look at that, what does it tell you? Well, here's what's interesting, that starting with that line right there, we have something that is going to be transcribed and then translated as follows.

The author of 4QMMT, and again, we're seeing fragments being put together here, but the author is appealing to somebody, right? We have written to you, want you to understand something so that you may understand the book of Moses. Here's Sefer and the beginning of Moses, so right there, so you see it in the English translation, the book of the Sefer of Moses, books of the prophets, and then David and generations, right? So, just to parse that out a tiny bit, the book of Moses is our Pentateuch. In the Hebrew Bible canon, the second section of the Hebrew Bible canon is called Prophets, Nevi'im, but it includes both what we call historical books because they have prophets in them, even though they're not writing prophets, and then our Hebrew Bible also has the writing prophets. The third section is going to be called writings, generally speaking, starting with Psalms, at least half of which are authored by David, and then, interestingly enough, now I realize we're dealing with not scrolls at this point, but we have a Hebrew Bible canon that has been put

together in a codex, bound together, but it usually ends with chronicles, and how does the book of chronicles start? It starts with genealogy, generations here, and so maybe our 4QMMT is reflecting a rather solid sense in that particular community of a three-part biblical canon, even as early as the first, at least first century BC.

Torah, Moses, prophets, Nevi'im, and perhaps the writings represented by David and the Psalms, and the generations are chronicles at the end. Well, that's an aside, but I always like canon discussions, but let's go on. We've talked about the biblical texts at Qumran.

Here are, for lack of a better term, sectarian texts. In other words, these particular texts give us a sense of who this community might have represented, right, because we have some specific concerns here. Notice, as I've summarized, there's a concern for covenant.

They are a new covenant community. There is a concern for study of Torah. In fact, they're supposed to have people engaged in study of Torah all the time.

They kind of cycle through the whole day and night sequence, always having somebody studying Torah. They call themselves the sons of Tzadok. That means they are serving as atonement for the rest of Israel.

That's how they view themselves, so priesthood. Ritual purity shows up in the archaeology, shows up in the texts. They have a temple scroll, so they're looking to a restored temple, and there certainly is, and this is evidenced especially in the thing called the war scroll.

They view themselves as living really at the end of time, and there's going to be a great battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. So, these texts that are called sectarian texts are going to have those threads weaving throughout them. There is, as well, this thing called the halachic letter, and I've already mentioned it, 4QMMT, but it does several interesting things.

It starts with a calendar. The Qumran folks had a different view of calendar. They seem to have been working with a solar calendar as opposed to a lunar calendar.

That's another whole discussion. We're not going there now. The second part of 4QMMT is engaged in the discussion of all kinds of arcane issues that have to do with law, purity, sections of purity, parts of Jerusalem that are more pure than others, etc.

The third part is the part from which I took that excerpt earlier because it's an appeal from whoever the author is to somebody else to consider all these things. So our halachic letter is very much of a sectarian text, and it has that halachic legal, if you will, section to it, and then more briefly, we can spend more time on these later

perhaps, the Hebrew word that is used specifically in the Qumran context for interpretation is *pesher*, and so we have several texts that purport to be commentaries on scripture, *pesherim*, plural commentaries, and the ones that are the most interesting, and we can also spend more time here, are commentaries on Nahum and Habakkuk. They are fascinating because of the choice of Nahum and Habakkuk and then what these communities do with those commentaries as they see them applying to their own circumstances.

We also have the community rule. This was found in K1. This is probably the most useful for helping us articulate what these folks required of the people who lived in them, what they required theologically in terms of belief, and what they required in terms of lifestyle and actions.

So, the community rule will deal with that. It also has a hymn at the end that the community leader is supposed to know as well. I mentioned the war scroll a moment ago.

It's the sense that these folks have that they are living in the end times, and there is going to be a huge cataclysmic battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. There's also a very, very long scroll. It's the longest one, the Temple Scroll, and then finally, we have a copper scroll made out of copper, which is particularly interesting because once they got it unrolled, which was no easy task, it described where the treasure was found.

I don't think for a moment there weren't a bunch of people reading that copper scroll trying to figure out how to follow the directions to get to where the treasure was. Well, let's just look at a few more of the additional library holdings here because we've got biblical texts. We've got the sectarian texts that are clearly related to how this community rates themselves to the biblical material.

And then in addition, well, pseudepigrapha, writings falsely attributed to major figures in the biblical canonical history. There are a number of those that show up in fragments at Qumran. And so, as I suggested a moment earlier, these folks are not isolated in terms of their tradition and literary stuff from the wider Jewish Judaisms, let's put it that way, wider Jewish worldviews.

Some of that stuff gets represented here as well. There are some works that address legal issues, *halakha*, and then even an increasing material, increasing numbers, and percentages as the cave 4 material has been analyzed further. There are some things that we might be tempted to call wisdom literature.

Well, let's kind of summarize what we have in terms of what the texts and the finds from archaeology show us. I've suggested these already, but this is a summary as we

try and figure out what might have constituted the worldview or worldviews of these people. First of all, they're big on covenant.

And in some ways, they see themselves as kind of recapturing the covenant as made at Sinai between God and his people. To that end, they have to have themselves, as I said earlier, the priesthood. They're the sons of Tzadok, the sons of righteousness, if you will, the sons who are going to be those who will serve as atonements for the rest of Israel.

We are big on purity and certainly waiting for the end of time. Our Pesher texts and the War Scroll text will make that clear.

Now, as you read material on Qumran, most folks who write about it and talk about it will suggest that it was a community of Essenes. And I just defined them in a thumbnail sketch. Essenes, as we know from work outside Qumran, strict, strict community, separatist, exclusive.

We have a number of people, scholars, scholars, and ancient sources who actually refer to Essenes who have nothing to do with the Qumran community, but they know Essenes. So, if we had time, we would take some time to read Pliny the Elder. He talks about an ascetic community.

Philo does as well. And you also have probably our most extensive source on who Essenes were, is Josephus. Both in his wars, we'll describe them, and in antiquities.

He takes some time to describe the Essenes. Josephus also describes Sadducees, Pharisees, and Zealots, along with the Essenes. But Josephus helps us a good deal in that regard because we have those descriptions.

There have been those, as I said earlier, who have identified our Qumran folk as Essenes. Having said that, we do, just looking through the textual lens, find out that these texts do have some common themes that they are sharing with Sadducees. Sadducees would have been those folks related to the temple.

This is another whole issue, but Sadducee is a designation that comes from Sadduk. And so, Sadducees in the first century were people who were, as I said above, more closely associated with the temple. So, some folks see that, and particularly this is our Lawrence Schiffman, see that we have that continuity here as well, particularly since some of our Pesher texts contain pretty strong polemic against the Pharisees.

Well, quick proposal, kind of in closure, at least for now. I'm one of those who is a bit agnostic on simply monolithically classifying these people as Essenes. With any community, there's going to be some dynamism.

It's going to be organic, developing, et cetera. All you need to do is think of a community wherever it happens that you live and think of it 40 years ago and how it has changed between then and now for all kinds of reasons. So, let's try this, and I'm going to suggest to you that this particular community, even though it was exclusivist, even though it withdrew, even though it was isolated, did experience some changes.

So, here's a suggestion: Priestly families in the 150s BC were not a good time for the whole temple establishment in Jerusalem, not a good time at all. As we read Josephus, we know they were buying and selling the priesthood and so on.

So, I'll read and you can read along. Members of priestly families were godly members of priestly families appalled at the capitulation of the Hasmonean dynasty to Hellenistic influences and the impact that had on the temple and on the priesthood. And so, therefore, over some decades, I don't know how long, they withdrew into the wilderness.

And that withdrawal was an attempt to, as you can read here, get back to what the covenant would have been in the wilderness at Sinai. The wilderness at Sinai had been a place where God's people met God. And so, this community wants to go and re-regroup that, if you will, return to a pure lifestyle.

And then, of course, they see this, as I note for you, as an end times event as well. Now, how long this took? Don't know. They do see themselves because what's going on in the temple in Jerusalem was so awful in their mind, so abominable.

They see themselves as becoming the means for atonement for the rest of Israel. They see their community as being a ritually based pure community. They see themselves as the sons of Zadok.

All of that is part of this picture. And they call themselves those who will atone for Israel. Later on, and exactly when this happened, it's hard to say.

It may have been after the earthquake in 31 BC. It's hard to say. But later on, the suggestion would be perhaps they were joined by other folks who shared that same sense of separation, of purity, of piety.

And so it could be that in its final years, prior to the fall, to the Roman onslaught, perhaps they did develop more of an Essene flavor. We haven't had time to read those sources that we see that describe Essenes outside. But at least this gives us a little bit of a beginning.

At any rate, when Qumran fell to the Roman onslaught, Jerusalem succumbs. It turns out that some scrolls, at least if not from Qumran, from the area around, were

brought to Masada because we do see in Masada that great fortress that had been Herod's fortress but became the last stronghold of the Zealots. In several of the casemate wall rooms in Masada, we find some significant scrolls there.

Perhaps some of those came from Qumran after the fall of Qumran. Now, there's much more to say as usual, but just in closure for now, just to recap a little bit, fleshing out what we started with. We have 11 caves overall.

Cave 4, as I said, has suggestions of somewhere around 500 manuscripts, but overall some 800 manuscripts. Look at the number of fragments. Hard to say complete, but imagine putting those together.

What these texts do, and again, I've just distilled this into a very quick summary. Most of these are coming out of either the community rule or the war scrolls or the Peshir texts, but we see Judaism, and this is a particular Judaism at that point, Judaism. These texts will mention, and this is especially in the community rule, that there are at least two Messiahs anticipated, certainly strong apocalyptic connections, certainly importance here of cleansing and purity, and then possibly a John the Baptist connection.

And then, finally, I've said this twice already, but I can't emphasize enough how important it is to think of how these texts contribute to our understanding of the textual history of the Hebrew Bible, as well as how language has been developing as well. That's just an introduction to Qumran. We don't have time right now to unpack individual texts a little bit, but this gives us a start in remembering this is indeed an interdisciplinary study.

Everything from geology, history, archaeology, text study, sociology of the community, but that's enough for now.

This is Dr. Elaine Phillips in her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 12, Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls.