

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Introduction to Biblical Studies, Session 13, Selected Dead Sea Texts

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This is Dr. Elaine Phillips and her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 13, Selected Dead Sea Texts.

In our last lecture, we were addressing an introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls, and this time, we're going to focus just to explore a little bit on three of them.

They're quite disparate kinds of texts, but we'll see how they go. This is actually part of the pesher or interpretation of the Habakkuk Scroll. We're going to be returning to that in a little more detail in a moment.

Let me review just a tiny bit from where we were last time and then work our way to these scrolls. So simply by way of review, just a quick overview of the kinds of texts that we have. We noted last time that about one quarter of the texts that were found in the vicinity of Qumran were some form of biblical texts, fragments thereof.

We talked about that last time. When we moved to the sectarian texts, again just by way of review, those are the texts that are germane to this particular community, and we did see some particular emphases. We're going to revisit those as we explore what kind of community this might be or have been, but the emphases were especially on covenant and study of the Torah.

They called themselves the sons of Zadok, and that gives us some indication in terms of their interest in the priesthood; however, that worked its way out. Clearly, in terms of the archaeology as well as texts, and we're going to say more about that in a moment, there was an emphasis on ritual purity, and then there was also a looking forward to a restored temple and related to that the final battle between good and evil, the war of the sons of light and the sons of darkness. That's not a text we're going to explore, but it certainly is an important one.

Again, simply to catch up from last time, reviewing ourselves, the question was who were these folks and we often see Essenes automatically being the label that is attached to them and there's lots to say about Essenes. We mentioned last time that they do show up in some form or at least some kind of ascetic community is mentioned. Josephus is probably our best source on the identity and nature of the Essenes sects, but there are others as well.

We also noted briefly that these texts do share common themes with Sadducees and as we're going to explore a little bit more in a moment, there was a very subtle but firm polemic against what we might think of as Pharisees. Therefore, the suggestion

has been made, and it's Lawrence Schiffman who has probably been spearheading this, but others do as well that we don't want to simply think of Essenes but rather think of it as a community that is changing over time. And so the suggestion is that long about 150s BC, when the priesthood in Jerusalem and the temple personnel in Jerusalem were not exactly in the most exemplary state, there was a group of people who were quite appalled, as I note for you, at the capitulation to Hellenistic influences and therefore following the pattern that goes all the way back to Sinai and the covenant, they withdrew to the wilderness because the wilderness was perceived as a place just as the community who left Egypt were coming out and they met God there, so these folks anticipated that, but they added on their expectation of an end times event.

This was a very eschatologically focused community. They also, as you see in particularly the community rule, we're going to look at that a little bit more, they perceived themselves to be an atonement in some sense for Israel. Having said that, that's talking about how to think about some of those earlier manifestations.

Perhaps later on, we did have the community joined by other sectarians and other people, and you do have a rather robust community, and perhaps indeed, later, prior to its fall to the Romans in AD 68, it may have also had some Essene influence in it as well. Well, that's going to lead us then to what it is we're going to study, the three texts that we're going to focus on, and the kinds of questions we want to ask about them. I mentioned the rule of community a moment ago, this was one of the texts that was found in Cave 1, that's why it's called 1QS.

Q refers to Qumran, and the S refers to the first word of the Hebrew title, Serech HaYachad. So, the Rule of the Community, we're going to come back to that and pose a couple of questions about it after we talk about how it's organized. Second texts that we want to look at, and I'm going to combine these because they're both examples of interpretive texts.

Pesher means interpretation; it's a particular kind of interpretation; we'll see how it works in a moment, and it's Pesharim because that's plural, of course, so we're going to look at the Nahum and Habakkuk commentaries. And then our final one is going to be 4QMMT, which we'll explore just a little bit more, we already have, but we're going to explore again. Cave 4 is the 4 there, Q again, Qumran, and then Mikzatma Sehat Torah, an expression that shows up in one of the lines of that, and we'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment.

Let's pose just briefly the kinds of issues that we want to be thinking about because we don't just open the text and say, well, that's interesting, and then stop with it. There are particular issues to address. So, the question is, in each one of these, what major theological themes are showing up? Now, thinking back to that summary

statement that I just reviewed, we can probably speculate on what some of those might be, but at any rate, that's a question.

We also want to ask, with regard to the Serech HaYachad, for example, or the bits of Miktzatma Sehat Torah, 4QMMT, what biblical texts seem to have been high profile? Of course, Nahum and Habakkuk, Nahum and Habakkuk are the texts that are high profile, but then we want to ask the question, why? After all, those are not necessarily on everybody's radar screen, at least from our perspective. We do label them as within the Book of the Twelve, and some people call them minor, minor prophets. Well, the second major focus, speaking of minor and major, we want to ask the question, so within these texts, do we see some standout personalities? Who are the major figures? Who are the major groups that show up? And we're going to check on what that might mean.

And then again, just to refocus on our intent here, which is to learn something about this community. What do these texts contribute to our understanding of who might have been part of this community? So those are the directions we're going. We'll spend our first couple of minutes exploring just a little bit more of the community rule.

A quick look at it here. This is a script that we saw on the first slide when we looked at that fragment from, or sorry, I should say, columns from the Habakkuk Peshet. But this is one from community rule, and the orthography is very, very distinctive.

I won't spend any more time on that. What I do want you to see is just one thing. These two words here look the same, and they are amen, amen.

Let it be confirmed, let it be confirmed, and after they say something, particularly in the theological parts of this text, then there is a response from the congregation. There it is, amen, amen. It's helpful for us to think a little bit about how this text is structured, and it's going to be especially helpful because as I talk about just a few, just a few of the details, both in terms of theology and persons involved, I'm going to be referring to that shows up in column 5 or 7 or 11 or something like that.

So, here's the structure. In the first four columns of what we have, we've got a theological introduction, and from that, we learn a good deal. I'll come back to that in a moment.

Columns 5 through part of 6, we see what it is the community did. This too is extremely helpful. We find out what it took to get into the community, what it took to stay in the community, the kinds of strictures that were part of community life.

This helps us as we make some correlations between this community and what Josephus will talk about when he mentions Essenes in the first century. The

infractions and penalties are followed directly. If you do certain things within the community that aren't right, there were penalties that were lodged against you, and we'll just look at a couple of examples of those to get a feeling for that.

Further regulations show up. These are a little more disparate, but it's helpful to see that. Then the end of our text is a hymn, basically, and it's a hymn of somebody called the Master.

I'm going to unpack his persona a little bit more in just a moment, but that's our basic structure just to give us a sense in terms of what's there. As we saw from our introductory questions, the next one we need to ask is, all right, so who are the key figures that show up? This is going to link us directly with the last part of the text, which, as I said, is the hymn of the Master. A major figure is this person called the Master, who does have some kind of esoteric special knowledge.

I suppose if we were in a different circle, we might call it Gnosticism of some sort, but he has important roles. He's supposed to be teaching. He's among those who determine whether or not someone can actually get into the community, and then of course, he's going to be our exemplar in terms of keeping the precepts and being a figure who blesses and praises God.

In some ways, I'm not going to think of him as a king, but he certainly is a head and visible leader. Also, in terms of important persons, it mentioned that the priesthood is significant for this community, and we do indeed have, and again, remember the covenant, that we have covenant all the way back made at Sinai. We have a priesthood, and we have a Levitical tribe who is serving to help the priests and all of them together work in terms of addressing God and coming into God's presence.

Here, they're also pronouncing blessings and curses. We have, related to that, a group called the Sons of Zadok, and we'll remember the name of Tzadok as it shows up in our biblical historical narratives as well as being one of the important named priests. This could be a helpful identifier for us because if these folks are thinking of themselves as Sons of Zadok, and if in some way Tzadok is underlying our Proto-Sadducee movement, who are associated with the temple, we can see some possible connections there as well.

Of course, the thing to keep in mind is that always keep in mind, these folks who are in the Qumran community see themselves as a clean, purified rendition of the priesthood, unlike what was going on in Jerusalem. And then showing up, not only in this text, but particularly in this text, in the theological introduction, we do have someone called the Prince of Light, and that individual is going to contrast with the Angel of Darkness, and of course, following behind them are the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, and that's all aiming towards that great cataclysmic battle. A deliberative community? It certainly was.

There's a council. There were, going back to this business on precepts, or sorry, procedures within the community, there were certain things that the council took care of in terms of admission and discussion and deliberation, and within the council, there's clearly a hierarchy. So even from that list of key figures, we're going to get kind of an interesting feeling in terms of the nature of this community, just from the little bit that I've distilled and have said to you.

Just to review, most theological concepts, most significant theological concepts, this one is one that Josephus will also describe for us when he's describing the group he knows as Essenes. There's a determinism that shows up throughout this. It's not simply what we would probably theologially call predestination, it shows up as predetermination, and that's fairly evident.

There's also, and this comes back to our idea about Sons of Light, Sons of Darkness, but we also have within humans themselves, anthropological dualism, within humans themselves, a spirit of truth on the one hand, a spirit of falsehood on the other. We see that, by the way, in other manifestations of Judaisms during that day as well, but it certainly shows up in this context. I can't emphasize enough, so I'm saying it again and saying it in yellow: covenant, covenant, covenant, and they see themselves as affiliated with a new covenant in contrast to the kinds of things that they know have been happening.

Just to repeat something I said earlier, the members of this community atone for priests and for Israel, and they do it without burnt offerings, and we're going to see that repeated. You can see several different mentions there, column five, but also eight and nine, are going to make this point that this community, these Sons of Tzadok, these ritually pure folks, are supposed to serve as atonement. The text also, 1qs, mentions multiple messiahs.

There's a messiah of Aaron, but also a messiah of Israel is mentioned, and so you're going to see a very interesting sense, and of course, those of us are thinking through the offices that come together in Jesus, we see the great priestly function and the great king in Jesus here, but the messiahs of Aaron and Israel in this community are viewed as separate, and then in some sense we also have a prophet who is mentioned in this particular text. Makes for a great read. Let's carry on just a trifle and again think of the things that interface with what we have going on in our wider Judaism, part of which in that first century was Jewish Christian practice.

You have in this community cleansing by sprinkling with the purifying waters. Well, that has some very interesting reverberations; pure water, immersion, and sprinkling are mentioned here. As I mentioned earlier, there's an emphasis on hierarchy.

You're not just all one, although there is a sense in which economically, socio-economically they were, within the council, there's very much some stratification. Having said that, as I mentioned a moment ago, they do things that are normal functions in common. They eat together.

It's a special meal, by the way, and there are important aspects about being part of that common meal. One doesn't just start doing it right away, but at any rate, they eat in common, they pray in common, they deliberate in common, and the study of the Torah is essential. At all times, there has to be some person up studying Torah around the clock, and of course, as I note for you here, for them, Isaiah chapter 40 verse 3 is important.

A voice calling in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, or a voice calling in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, and of course how you think of that in the wilderness phrase is very interesting, and when you add it to prepare the way of the Lord, of course, the way is Torah study, so that's going to be really central to who they are and what they do. As I said a moment ago, they're not immediately eating in common. No, in order to be eligible to participate in the communal meal and other things that are part of this community, there were two years of probation before they actually fully became a member, and of course, determining that was up to the council and the master was part of it as well.

Well, it's always interesting to read through the list of things that if they did them wrong, they got certain penalties. In a moment, I'm going to describe the penalties. Often, I read these to classes, and we can make some fun parallels.

Well, of course, lying deliberately, deceit, and slander are heinous, and they were so in that context. Likewise, pronouncing the tetragrammaton, the four letters, the divine name, because they took exceedingly seriously the commandment that adjured people not to lift up the name of the Lord to emptiness. So, if they did that, they were immediately out of the community.

That was the penalty in that case. However, there are some of these infractions that sort of hit a little closer to home. Speaking foolishly or interrupting somebody, that got you some penalties.

Or sleeping during chapel got you some penalties as well. Did I say chapel? Assembly that merited penalties. Going naked before a companion was also a problem in their minds because, obviously, you're exposing things that should have been private.

This one too is interesting. Most of us don't go around spitting, but very often we are guffawing foolishly, and both of those also merited some penalties. There are others, but you get a sense in terms of the, well, the rigid nature of this community because

there seemed to have always been probably the equivalent of community police out to see if you were breaking these things.

And of course, different kinds of penalties, depending on the seriousness of your crime, as it were, could be that just for a time you didn't get to participate in the community meal. And again, that wasn't just having dinner together. It had very clear religious components to it.

Or perhaps your food was rationed radically. Or if on the case, for example, of uttering the divine name, expulsion was always a possibility as well. That's enough to say about community rule.

I hope it's enough to encourage you perhaps to explore it a little further. I'm going to make a switch now from those things that define the community as they perceive themselves to commentary. And again, these commentary bits are not full texts in that you saw from that picture.

Some of the parts are missing. There are some gaps, but they give us enough to work with. Just a reminder again, *pesher* is a specific word that means interpretation.

There are other words in Hebrew that mean interpretation, but that has a very key interpretive component to it in that they view these texts; whatever biblical texts they happen to be, they view them as applying to them. They would kind of retool and revise their position, but they viewed those texts as applying to them as they perceived themselves in the last days. So, want to keep that in mind as we move forward.

The first thing these texts do is cite part of a biblical verse. I have a biblical verse here, but they're actually doing it in phrases. Obviously, the audience is expected to know the whole of the verse.

In fact, the audience probably knew the Bible book itself, but anyway, it was a citation of a particular verse. And then it's going to be followed by in Hebrew, *pishro*. The phenomenal suffix is attached to the noun.

So, it's an explanation. All right. That's what you're going to see.

And then, as I summarized a moment ago, let's walk through this a little more specifically. Whatever prophetic text or parts of texts happened to be, it was read and revised, if you will, to represent whatever was going to happen in their context. So if catastrophic distress was prophesied in Nahum, and it was, or Habakkuk and it was, they retooled it so it looked like something that was going to happen in their own contemporary context.

Therefore, Assyria is the chief enemy of Nahum. Babylon was the chief enemy of Habakkuk's time. These are called in these texts, Kittim.

Now that's another whole issue. We have Kittim showing up in the book of Daniel, and they seem to be people coming from the islands somewhere in the West. But in these texts, they're very clearly Romans.

I will not take the time to explain how that becomes clear, especially in the Habakkuk commentary, but it is. So, they're thinking of them as Romans, and that's going to be significant because it's the middle of the second century when the Roman force was beginning to make itself felt. Sure, indeed, we have our Seleucid guy and the influence of Hellenism, and we have Antiochus Epiphanes, but even in that context, Rome is showing up.

So, hold that in mind. That's going to be important. And then, just to restate what I said earlier, this is going to represent the Qumran community strife against the rest of the Jews.

Oh, there it is. They are the only ones who are pure. And the strife that they have against the rest of the Jewish community, well, it's very helpful to use Habakkuk because that's how Habakkuk starts out.

So, we're going to return to that in just a moment. The challenge about these texts is that they are cryptic. They use labels to refer to particular persons or groups of persons, and it takes us a little bit of exploration to figure out exactly who those might be.

But we do have some help, and so there are ways in which we can at least try to insert them into the events that are taking place in the second and first centuries BC. Let's see how this works first with our Nahum Peshier. The question is, why Nahum? As I said a moment ago, this is a small text.

By the way, there are bits and pieces of Peshier on parts of Isaiah too, but these are more extensive. And just to answer my own question, you've got Nahum, as I said, prophesying against Assyria. So, it becomes a perfect text from the biblical text within which to shape these issues that we were talking about a moment ago.

So, our major figures here are going to be, again, the Kittim, representative of the slowly encroaching Romans coming in from the west. You also have a character that is, how shall we say, symbolized perhaps by the furious young lion. Now in chapter two of Nahum, there are several references to lions, lion cubs, etc.

And the question is going to be, what did that furious young lion do? I'm going to put the text up, or part of it, up in front of us in a moment, so we're going to track with it

a little bit more. But there's also a very interesting group that are called, at least in some of the translations, seekers after smooth things. And they don't just show up once.

They're kind of here, and we're supposed to get the impression that they are not perceived by this community as particularly good. Again, we'll get a text in front of us and just look at several of these examples. And we'll come back to the question, who were they and what did they do? We do have in this Nahum Peshier some named characters.

We've got somebody called Demetrius. We've got somebody called Antiochus. And immediately you're going to say, yay, we can identify who this is and when it fits.

But you know what? There are multiple Demetriuses in the scene. There are multiple Antiochuses on the scene. If you ever want a very gnarly, perhaps soporific read, read Josephus on this time period because you get a sense of all the interactions and interplay and things that were going on.

And you also see multiple characters with these names. Having said all that, however, let's see if we can make some possible historical connections. And I'm going to do it first by citing the part of the biblical text itself.

Then we're going to put the Peshier text up here and you're going to see different fonts that I think will help us understand what's going on. So, in Nahum chapter two, you simply have this expression or articulation within Nahum's prophecy: whither the lion goes, there is the lion's cub, carries on with none to disturb it. Well, here comes the Peshier text.

Pishro interpreted this concerns Demetrius, king of Egypt, who sought on the council of those who sought smooth things. Again, so we're getting a little bit of a negative perception because he's trying, he's the king of Greece, that's going to bring all sorts of bad things possibly. Anyway, he's trying to enter Jerusalem, right? Sought on the council of those who seek smooth things to enter Jerusalem.

And then I've skipped some stuff. She is In the hands of the kings of Greece from the time of Antiochus until the coming of the rulers of the Kittim. But then she shall be trampled, she Jerusalem, underfoot.

So again, we see Demetrius, whoever that is, he's a Hellenistic ruler somewhere who wants to come into Jerusalem. We see a timeframe, some Antiochus; is it the third? Is it the fourth? Fifth. And then we have the coming of the rulers of the Kittim.

And again, we have references to them showing up, especially in 160 and following BC. Well, let's first, and we're going to come to another example in a moment, but

let's first talk about these seekers after smooth things because the question I asked you earlier was, who were they? And then I made a comment right at the beginning to the effect that it seems like this community did not look too kindly on Pharisees. And believe it or not, we can put those together because you see the seekers after smooth things.

And just listen now to my pronunciation, which isn't going to be perfect, but I think it'll help. Halakot. Let me say it again.

Halakot. Halak is slippery or smooth, to be slippery or smooth. And so Halakot, smooth things.

It's got no ending. That means it's plural feminine. So, we have people who are seeking smooth things.

Halakot. Now listen to another word. You heard Halakot.

Now, I'm going to shift over. There's going to be a similarity, but differences as well. Halakot.

Halakot. Halakah means the way in which you walk and which you conduct yourself. Comes from Halakot, which simply means to walk or go.

It turns out that our group of folks called themselves Pharisees later on. This is proto-Pharisee stuff. But our folks who did that were very concerned with defining how people conducted themselves, i.e., addressing Halakot.

According to most scholars who are thinking about this, we have here a very interesting pun and a cryptic linguistic way of referring to these people: seekers after smooth things. This is not very nice and probably deceptive, whereas the proto-Pharisee movement would be concerned with Halakot. By the way, that's a term we're going to come back to when we talk about rabbinic literature.

So, we're not done with Halakah or Halakot, but at least it helps us here as well, I think. In terms of how it's working in the text, even in this Nahum Peshar, we see it showing up six times. And by the way, the Nahum Peshar is very brief, so obviously, this is a high-profile group.

And the way the community is perceiving these folks, these are people who are treacherous, you know? Slippery. Halakot. Slippery.

False teaching then led Ephraim and Manasseh away. Those are names of prominent tribes of Israel, which had been northern kingdoms and tribal areas, and they're mentioned in the book of Nahum itself. So, you've got the community itself, it's

looking out, it sees Greece, it sees the key team, it sees the seekers after smooth things.

They're all false and they're all in opposition to the community, so they're all enemies of the community. Here's another example.

And again, I'm just sort of dashing through these to give us a little bit of a sense. Likewise, in chapter two, just shortly after the passage, we looked at a moment ago, still on lions. The lion fills its caves with prey and its dens with victims, okay? Dens with victims.

Well, here we go again. Interpreted, Peshro. This concerns the furious young lion, a little gap here, who executes revenge on those who seek smooth things.

In other words, whoever this furious young lion is now, and he's not named, he's going after seekers after smooth things, i.e. Pharisees, or moving towards what Josephus will describe as Pharisees. And he hangs men alive, formerly in Israel. Because of a man hanged alive on the tree, he proclaims, and then another quote, behold, I am against you, says the Lord of hosts.

A biblical quote coming in here. Just a quick aside: notice how these composers, whoever they were, of these documents interfaced so much with the biblical text. They certainly knew it.

They were winding it all in together, but then they have it in their own context. Well, just a couple of notes, and then I'm going to quote something from Josephus that might help us with this hanging man alive and furious young lion. Crucifixion was perceived in our Jewish material as hanging alive.

And just to remind ourselves, and we know this from reading Deuteronomy 21, only dead bodies were to be hung on trees, right? According to the biblical Torah, only dead bodies. And, of course, that text tells us that if someone is hung on a tree, it represents their being under God's curse. Crucifixion, Romans used it a lot, but it had been practiced before that.

The Assyrians did, but crucifixion is hanging alive. With that backdrop, our Peshro text, as well as just this understanding, then we can look at something that Josephus tells us. I'm going to quote part of it just to maybe get a sense of what might have been happening.

A guy named Alexander Jannaeus, early first century BC, to make a long story short, did not get on with the Pharisees at all. So here we've got an abbreviated segment from Josephus's description in Jewish war. As for Alexander Jannaeus, whom he's

been talking about up to this point, his rage has grown so extravagant that his barbarity proceeded to the degree of impiety.

For when he had ordered 800 to be hung upon crosses in the midst of the city, he had the throats of their wives and children cut before their eyes. And these executions he saw as he was drinking and lying down with his concubines. The predecessor of the section before that is talking about his antipathy to Pharisees.

It's talking about a whole rebellion that came up against him, and it's a violent kind of time, but notice how he has responded. Another Josephus quote, which may refer to the same kind of thing, certainly does give us an additional sense in terms of Alexander Jannaeus. Continuing to read this time out of antiquities, Josephus's antiquities instead of the wars.

As to Alexander Jannaeus, his own people were seditious against him. And as I said a moment ago, you see that boiling all around these contexts. At a festival, which was then celebrated, this is the festival of Tabernacles or Sukkot.

When he stood upon the altar and was going to sacrifice, the nation rose upon him and pelted him with citrons, one of the four fruits that they had for that festival, which they then had in their hands because the law of the Jews required that at the feast of Tabernacles, everyone should have branches of palm tree and the citron tree. And he tells about how they've done that elsewhere. They also reviled him as deriving from a captive and so unworthy of his dignity and of sacrificing it.

He was in a rage and slew about 6,000 of them. This one doesn't mention crucifixion, but we certainly see the character of Alexander Jannaeus, and we can certainly understand why it might be that this text, this Nahum commentary, is indeed talking about a furious young lion and crucifixion. If we make that association, then one of the things we can do is say, okay, this particular text is written early in the first century BC, if it's referencing that.

So, that helps us a little bit. Let's move, see what we can do with the Habakkuk Peshier. In this column, whoops, I didn't mean to go back quite like that.

Here we go. This is part of the Habakkuk Peshier. And we actually, just before this section, we have our famous verse, the just shall live by faith.

So that's actually down here in the preceding column. And now, here we have Peshro. All right.

And then it goes on beyond that point. If we had time, those of you who read Hebrew can play around with this just a little bit. But this is commentary on that very

significant verse in Habakkuk 2:4. But some backdrop just again to get our background here.

Habakkuk is going to as we read the first chapter of Habakkuk itself, in the first six verses, Habakkuk is saying, Lord, don't you see what's going on? Don't you see all the evil? Don't you see that people are ignoring the Torah? So first, he's addressing internal evil. But then, of course, when he's bringing that complaint before the Lord, you have God's response. And the response is, you haven't seen anything yet.

The Babylonians are coming. And Habakkuk is going to pick up that theme in the rest of chapter one and then move into chapter two, where we have God's admonition to him to wait, to wait, and then the just shall live by faith. So now let's just reframe that.

That was a terribly quick summary. You can go back and read it. But reframe it through the lenses of this Qumran community.

This internal evil that Habakkuk, again, remembers Habakkuk is prophesying in the late seventh and early sixth century BC, 586, 587. That's our sixth-century time period, just before the Babylonians took over Judah. The internal evil that I've just described for you, the Qumran community is going to take those descriptions and say, we have some very hideous figures that we have been experiencing that are evil, that are part of Judaism itself, that have come out of the Jerusalem context.

One of them is going to be called the wicked priest. Okay. So that internal evil is embodied in the figure of the wicked priest, and he also gets some other designations attached to him, the liar and the spouter of lies.

The Habakkuk commentary says, God's going to deal with this, but it's going to be the key team who are coming, right? The key team is coming, the Romans, and that then is those persons who are going to be the Babylonians. And of course, through our Qumran community, the covenant community, this is going to happen in the last days. They are, again, the final generation.

So, let's reconstruct these events a bit and see what we have. Again, I'm drawing bits and pieces from the text itself. As the Habakkuk commentary describes this, we have a priest.

It turns out to be wicked. He starts out well, but he becomes corrupt. Again, think of the little bit I've told you and what you might want to read more about.

Second century BC, in terms of what was going on in the temple context with the priesthood being bought and sold to the highest bidder in the wider Hellenistic context, terrible stuff, right? Become corrupt. So, he has slid down that nasty slope. Jerusalem is defiled, and the temple is defiled.

As a result, someone, a character in this text who is repeatedly called the teacher of righteousness, teacher of righteousness, he's opposing the wicked priest at first, but eventually, because he's a minority and his group withdraws, they go to the covenant community. And we actually see a little slice of how ugly this confrontation was. Again, you have to read the whole thing to get it.

But let's at least pick up on one of the more horrifying events that's described in this context. Habakkuk 2.15, the second part of the verse, woe to him who pours out his venom to make them drunk that he may gaze on their nakedness. Some translation issues are part of that problem in terms of the way the pessah represents it.

But that's the verse. Now, Pishro, our Qumran community goes on and says, this is the wicked priest who hasn't only done all the things we've just talked about, but this wicked priest pursued the teacher of righteousness, Moreh zedek, to the house of his exile, that he might confuse him with his venomous fury linked back to the verse. And if he appointed time for rest on the day of atonement, he appeared before them to confuse them and to cause them to stumble on the day of fasting, their Sabbath of repose.

Now, in case we haven't quite gotten that, think of how awful that is. Basically,, the day of atonement, as we know from reading the details in Leviticus 16, was not only a fast day but also a fast from everything. It was the most solemn day of the year.

Even today, Jerusalem is basically not as much as it used to be a generation ago, but basically shuts down on the day of atonement. But here you've got someone, the wicked priest, who is so venomous and so disregarding what is going on in terms of their ritual calendar, is coming out to apparently the solace, the haven of the Qumran community, pursuing the teacher of righteousness there. Now, just one more thing, because it provides a little bit of a jump-off, maybe, for the text we're going to deal with next.

This community seemed to be functioning in terms of a solar calendar, 364 days a year, and if you read some of the other Qumran texts, it's pretty evident that they have a solar calendar behind them. Other parts of Judaism were functioning on what's called a lunar calendar, and so you could also have an interesting issue going on behind this confrontation in terms of whether or not the Jerusalem aristocracy and the Jerusalem hierarchy were perhaps able to do this, wicked priest able to do this, because his calendar was different, his day of atonement ended up being different. Well, there are lots of things that are left still in question, but this does give us a little sense in terms of maybe how to slide some of these texts and the community who wrote them into a historical context.

It gives us a little sense in terms of the differences and the perceptions of this community as terms of the wickedness and horror of what's going on in Jerusalem, and it gives us a little sense in terms of how they did bits and pieces of interpretation. Here's our third one, and I mentioned the calendar issues because there may be a connection here. The suggestion is that perhaps this text, Q4, Qumran, and then MMT is Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah. I'm going to come back to that in a moment because one of the segments of this text just because it seems to have a more conciliatory tone to it.

In other words, there's a part where the authorship of the text seems to be saying to its audience, let's kind of get back together again and see if maybe we can overcome some of these differences. That's a distinctly different tone from what we see manifest in our Habakkuk Peshar, where the wicked priest is going after the teacher of righteousness in the community. So the suggestion is that if it indeed reflects a more conciliatory tone, it could have been written a bit earlier on.

Ends with an appeal for the leader of the community to whatever the Jerusalem establishment happens to be. The expression Miqsat Ma'ase is translated by some of the precepts of the Torah, and although it's a bit fuzzy where that rectangle is, it is where that text is. Some people have tried to make a relationship correspondence to Paul.

You can go in that direction if you want to or not, but at least there we have what has given this text its identifying name. Let's unpack a couple of the theological themes and then say a little bit more. A moment ago, I mentioned that the Qumran community seems to have been, well not seems to, was on a different calendar.

Some of the other texts make that very clear, but it turns out that this text may have, and I'm saying, possibly a calendar in the first part. Now you're asking me, so why are you so tentative about it? Well, the Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah text for QMMT was indeed found in cave four. And let me just remind you of something we said in our previous lecture.

Cave four was apparently the library for this community. Cave four, unlike the rest of the caves, did not have scrolls stored in jars, which preserved them much better. The scrolls were apparently just kept on shelves, and of course when those disintegrated and the scrolls fell down, they became very small fragments.

I talked about that in the preceding lecture. As it turns out, this particular text has six different parts to it. In order to bring it together, you have to kind of make a composite text, and that's why we have a little trouble with it in terms of piecing together what might have actually been the whole of the text.

Therefore, it seems like the first part may have been a bit of a discussion of calendar issues. What's really clear is the major portion of it, which has to do with purity. In fact, it's talking about Levitical stuff and things that show up in Deuteronomy, and it's talking very, very specific terms about principles of purity, principles maintaining purity, how to understand purity, how to understand purity in the temple, in Jerusalem, spheres of purity.

You can go on and on in that context. But then you have this third section, in which, as we said, there is on the basis or on the part of the authorship, apparently an appeal to, back to the Jerusalem establishment. And as part of doing that, the author says, would like you to come to read what's been written in the books of Moses, prophets, and David to, again, there's some gaps here, dor of a dor.

And of course, dor means generation. So, David to, generation to generation. Now I'm going to come back to this in just a moment, but that David to dor of a dor could reflect things that are within the boundaries of David and the Psalms on the one hand, and then chronicles, which starts out in first, what we know as first chronicles, appealing to genealogies, dor of a dor.

Another theological theme. I mentioned this a moment ago. There are significant treatments here in our major purity section of parts of Leviticus.

Well, just a quick note. This is our segment right here. It starts at that point, and you see sepher Mo right there.

And then it goes on and kind of picks up together. But here you have David and dor of a dor right there. And so, the suggestion is this may be reflective, maybe reflective of some sense in the Qumran community of the Torah of Moses.

No problem. Everybody accepted that by that time, but a component of the Hebrew Bible, the Nevi'im, the prophets, and then possibly a third section that we might call David's Psalms all the way to chronicles. Of course, these are all in their time in scrolls.

And so how we think of the interior parts of that is another issue. I'm going to come back to that in another lecture, but we do at least have this to think about coming out of our Qumran community. Well, all right.

That's been three very brief looks at three texts, actually four texts, two separate pressure texts. But I want to give just a quick thumbnail sketch of Qumran community on the one hand and Christianity on the other, looking first at similarities between whoever it was that lived out at Qumran over those years when they developed as a community and then Christianity. And of course, to make either one of those monolithic is a challenge, but at least let's see what characterizes them.

There's a focus on covenant very clearly. In some ways, there's a focus on land, but not as much as you might have in some other Jewish writings. We'll come back to that.

Both are conservative and devout. Even though there are different kinds of flavors of this, they both are apocalyptically oriented and very clearly scripture-based; both the New Testament and the Qumran material have significant quotes from Deuteronomy, representative of the Torah, Isaiah representative of the prophets, and then Psalms representative of that third section. A clear, clear understanding of the supernatural realms and beings in the supernatural realms, the clear expectation of Messiah.

And there is, although it's quite different, the scroll from Qumran, Cave 11 scroll does talk about Melchizedek primarily as a judging figure. There's a love, although, for Qumran, it's a broken kind of love for Jerusalem and the temple. And then there's a sense of indwelling human spirit.

And then their understanding, of course, of humans and what we would call hamartiology, sin, forgiveness, prayer, symbolism of water comes in, in terms of baptism. Now, that's just a quick sketch. There are some other things as well, but let's look at some of the differences.

Qumran's a closed community. All the things to get in, made it difficult to get in, seems to have been, by and large, a celibate community, no missionary zeal, uh, pretty clearly in terms of our Dead Sea text. If it wasn't just that tiny little place, it was local to that area, confined to that geography, uh, clearly asceticism along with their concern for ritual purity.

Sometimes Josephus mentions that there were some Essenes who did indeed marry, but, uh, they were married specifically so they could fulfill the commandment about be fruitful and multiply according to the way Josephus presents that particular group of Essenes. Uh, the Qumran folks are admonished to hate their enemies. That doesn't exactly come across through Jesus' teaching.

They don't associate with folks on the margins, and they probably themselves were on the margins. Again, there's a process for getting into a closed community.

You're only allowed to participate in the communal meal after two years of probation. The hierarchy, as we've mentioned, has no interest in miracles. And yet, of course, we see Jesus, who does miracles as the son of God.

Mentioned the solar calendar already for Qumran as well. Just a couple additional things. Jesus will summarize the Torah.

Okay. It's all in the law and the prophets and he makes summary statements. The scrolls don't do this.

Instead, they're very carefully doing its interpretation, pishro, et cetera. Jesus teaches in parables, and the scrolls don't. Jesus clearly declares he is the son of God.

Teacher of righteousness did not. There is a profound focus on the kingdom, especially with our kingdom parables. Although we have our gospel writers writing clearly the scrolls community focuses primarily on writing and writing in order to do interpretation uh, as well as describe their own situation.

You've got Qumran exceedingly strict in terms of Sabbath laws. That, of course, is one of the issues that is raised with regard to Jesus. We see it in John five, we see it in John nine.

And of course, between the end of Mark two and Mark three, we see these challenges that were raised for Jesus' disciples in that Mark passage. Resurrection is not clearly taught in the Qumran context. And, of course, it's the centerpiece of our faith.

So even though this provides a really fascinating backdrop in terms of the Judaism's in those first centuries BC and AD, um, the attempts, Oh, maybe now 70 some years ago to interface Christianity, nascent Christianity with Qumran really have faltered quite entirely. Well, just one more thing. This is our Isaiah scroll and we're seeing again that same classic script.

I mentioned Isaiah 40 as being kind of a touchstone verse, a voice of one calling in the wilderness, preparing a way for the Lord that is going to be right at that point in this text. Way back at the beginning of the introductory lecture, one of the things we said was that, and I'll review this in just a moment again, uh, this discovery at Qumran was the most remarkable discovery, among other things, because of the assurance it gave us of the reliability of the textual tradition, uh, that the Masoretes had used for centuries. So just to review enclosure, 11 caves so far, 800 manuscripts, a huge number of fragments, especially because of cave four.

As mentioned already, Hebrew language developments and textual history of the Hebrew Bible. And it does give us insights, very helpful insights. I've used the term Judaisms and, uh, just putting it back out there again.

We don't want to think of Judaism in the first century as being monolithic at all. I'm going to come back to that when we deal with our rabbinic materials and in the interval, we're going to study some things about extra canonical literature. All of those contribute to our sense of this complex and rich resource that we have.

That's enough for now.

This is Dr. Elaine Phillips and her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 13, Selected Dead Sea Texts.