

Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino, Judaism Before Jesus, Session 11, The Dead Sea Scrolls

© 2024 Tony Tomasino and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Anthony Tomasino and his teaching on Judaism before Jesus. This is session 11, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

So, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been talked about as one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th century and maybe of any century in some ways.

Finding a text intact is like the Holy Grail of archaeology, you know. It's just such a remarkable thing because you've got something now that is ancient. You can see what it was like, how it was back in the old days. You can decipher it, you can hopefully, you can then read it, and then you can present those ideas for discussion and for the controversies that they might cause because now we've got a bit of a window into the world right around the time before Jesus lived and the Dead Sea Scrolls provide a number of remarkable insights into this time period.

It's really kind of interesting because when we think about the Dead Sea Scrolls, and I know that one very famous biblical scholar was asked about, must have been about 20 years ago now, what he felt that the Dead Sea Scrolls had contributed to biblical studies and he thought for a minute, and he said, I really can't think of anything at all. And those of us who have studied scrolls extensively went, seriously? Seriously? But the ways that the Dead Sea Scrolls have impacted our study of not only the Bible but also of early Judaism can only really be called revolutionary because pretty much everything that we come across, all the ideas that we see in the texts that we already knew about, things like 1 and 2 Maccabees and some of the other apocryphal texts, some of the pseudepigrapha like 1 Enoch and other books, all these ideas can now be seen through the lens of these very ancient manuscripts which we did not possess before. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the earliest manuscripts we had of, say, the book of 1st Enoch came from the Middle Ages.

Same thing with several other texts. The book of Jubilees. Jubilees was a very important text of the Dead Sea Scroll sect. It was very important in some sections of early Christianity. It was preserved by, for instance, the Ethiopic Church which considered it to be scripture. But the earliest manuscript we had of the book of Jubilees came from, oh, about 1200 AD.

So, getting these texts and finding them and being able to look at them has silenced some of those critics who would like us to believe that the entire Bible was written last Tuesday or something of that sort. But, obviously an exaggeration, but yes, there were people there who would say things like the books of the prophets were not

really written until near the end of the intertestamental period. There were folks who claimed that the New Testament religion was more Greco-Roman than Jewish.

These kinds of criticisms have been silenced. These days, we are looking at everything and testing everything, all these theories, against the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Sometimes, there is very pertinent evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls for our arguments.

Sometimes, maybe not so much. But in any case, nobody can say or do anything about early Judaism and the time around Jesus without having a pretty good knowledge of what's in the Dead Sea Scrolls. So, let's talk about where these things came from.

Well, you know, scrolls have, if you're around 20 years ago, you know that the Dead Sea Scrolls were really big news in those days. And Time magazine cover, yay, they made the cover of Time. And this was, you know, I think about, I don't know if I can see the date, no I can't, but I'm pretty sure this was about 1997.

And here we have the Weekly World News. I don't think there's a date on this either, but when did they still publish the Weekly World News? Anyway, the Weekly World News says top religious scholars reveal new Dead Sea Scroll prophecies, including that Saddam Hussein would surrender and move to New Jersey. A new Messiah raises the dead, right? And much more from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

I remember a little cartoon that I'd cut out a number of years ago and stuck in one of my files where some people are sitting around and having coffee and munching on some treats, and the wife is saying, who would have ever guessed that such a wonderful brownie recipe would be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls? So anyway, the Scrolls have definitely caught the attention of the public and our imaginations, but the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, well, the story, is pretty well known to this day.

The first discovery happened in 1947 and the way that the story was told, which is almost certainly not true, but we'll get to that in a minute, but the way the story was told is that there is a Bedouin shepherd out in the region near the Dead Sea where these caves are located and that one of his sheep was climbing up on the side of this hill and so in order to drive his sheep away, he picked up a rock and threw it at his sheep and apparently the sheep ducked and the rock goes over the sheep's head and goes into the cave and he hears a sound of breaking pottery and so the youth came back with one of his friends and the two of them climbed up and scaled up to the side of this hill to where they could get into this cave and when they came inside they found, there's the cave, doesn't look like much of a cave, but it's a cave, what they found was jars. Now, the first thing is they thought, woohoo, we found jars, and they thought, you know, great, they could sell them to some crazy American tourists, but then they discovered that inside the jars were, in fact, scrolls and now they really

got something because jars are cool and all and you could sell jars to antique collectors, but scrolls on the other hand, they were remarkable and finding scrolls in any kind of location in those days was considered, well, it was like finding gold.

Now, the reason why I say that story is probably not true is the fact that we know that the Bedouins often scoured those caves for whatever they could find that they could sell in the antiquities market, but it was illegal. So, these people were not about to admit that they had been in that cave looking for treasures that they could steal and sell, but they instead came up with this elaborate story about the rock and the sheep and all that kind of good stuff, but in this cave what they found were six scrolls and one of the most marvelous ones and best preserved is the Great Isaiah Scroll, the scroll of the book of Isaiah. If you go to Israel today and you go to the shrine of the book where many of the Dead Sea Scrolls are preserved and kept, you will find that this Great Isaiah Scroll has been unrolled and circles the building.

The building is remarkable. It's shaped like the end of a Torah scroll and so as you go inside it is a big circular building and all around the outside of the building is the Isaiah Scroll unrolled and on display there. Absolutely, automatically, great discovery and one of the first things that was heralded is we have discovered the oldest copy of the book of Isaiah ever.

This was a remarkable thing, and this was really the main excitement initially about finding such an old copy of the book of Isaiah. Now, in addition to the book of Isaiah, there were also several other scrolls and another quite long scroll, which has come to be known as the Community Rule or the Manual of Discipline. The Order of the Community is kind of like the first few words of this text, but the Community Rule got a nickname fairly early being a Methodist myself, this is kind of amusing to me but one of the early people who got to look at this scroll and study it and translate it said it reminded him of the United Methodist Book of Discipline and that's how it came to be known as the Manual of Discipline.

Now, being very familiar with the Manual of Discipline, I can see the resemblance. Essentially, this text is an order for life in a sectarian community, apparently a community that lived together in a compound of some sort.

They seem to assume that everybody here is sharing their meals together, that they're putting themselves under discipline, they've got rules about who can speak and when they can speak at dinnertime and if they can speak at dinnertime, things like spitting, when you're allowed to spit and when you're not allowed to spit, and other kinds of rules of this sort which would kind of order the entire life of those people living in this community. So, this was the Community Rule, and it was fairly quickly deciphered. As you can see, it's in really good shape, and so it was pretty easy to read.

The Hebrew of these texts for scholars was actually quite nice and quite easy to read because it was kind of a remarkable discovery in this sense because the Hebrew is really kind of like a midpoint between what you see in the Old Testament and what you see in the Mishnah, the Jewish holy book, the rabbinic texts which were codified around 250 AD. And yeah, in a lot of ways, the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly these sectarian texts, represents a midpoint between those two kinds of Hebrew. Several other texts were discovered.

A commentary in the book of Habakkuk, as you can see, is a little bit more broken up and not quite so clear and easy to read. We've got a copy of the War Scroll, and the War Scroll is a rather remarkable text and is an account of that battle which is going to take place one day between the children of light and the children of darkness. The Genesis Apocryphon is a fun text.

It is basically a retelling of the stories of Genesis from the time of Noah to through the stories of Abraham, and some portions of it are told in the first person. So we have this wonderful story of when Noah was born that Noah's father Lamech tells about how he was so upset because the baby was so beautiful that he was sure that he was really a child of the Watchers, of the angels, rather than his own son. And so he got to see the face of his son when he was grown.

He's oh yeah, he looks like me, okay? But there are just some lovely little legends here and marvelous stuff of that sort retelling the book of Genesis. The Thanksgiving Scroll is some lovely poetry with the theme of giving thanks to God.

Another text that I don't have a picture of here is a Targum of the book of Job. What a Targum is, is a text, a translation of a Hebrew text into Aramaic. And so, the word Targum is translated.

The Job Targum was also one of these original texts. The texts in their jars were hauled off to Jerusalem for sale, and they were bought originally by an antiquities dealer. We don't know how much he paid for them, but he sold them then to the Orthodox prelate over the area of Jerusalem, a fellow named Mars Samuel.

And he sold them apparently for a hundred dollars. So, this is in 1947, you know, inflation and all that kind of thing. But Mars Samuel announced the discovery of the texts and brought the attention of them to a number of people.

He took them to the American school in Jerusalem where they were studied by a number of different scholars. And there were some differing opinions at the beginning. There are some people who thought that they were forgeries, particularly that book of Isaiah, for crying out loud, it was so beautiful, so neat, it looked like it could have been written last week, you know.

And so there were a number of people who claimed that these texts were not real. There were other people who said, oh, they're absolutely real. This debate went on, and it was kind of settled by a very famous American archaeologist named Albright, who declared that they were authentic.

Once Albright had given his seal of approval to the Dead Sea Scrolls, that was the end of the argument. They were authentic. Now Mars Samuel knows that everybody is interested in his Dead Sea Scrolls, and so he wants to sell them.

Of course, he wants to make a fair profit, so he offers them on the market for a million dollars. But he doesn't get any takers. Nobody buys them.

The reason why was that they were a political hot potato. The scrolls were found in Jordan, a region that was controlled by Jordan, and then they were brought to Israel. And so, they were considered to be smuggled property.

You don't go buying smuggled property, you know. Eventually, a very prominent Jewish scholar named Eliezer Sukenik bought the scrolls through a middleman. They were very secret, very private, and hidden, and he bought them for \$250,000. So Mars Samuel certainly made a hefty profit on this.

But of course, this did not stop the controversy at all because Jordan, for many years after, was claiming those scrolls belonged to us. And Israel was saying, they're Jewish scrolls, they're obviously, what do you even want with them, you know, they're our past. So this, that, that went on for decades, really.

Now, more scrolls were found by those Bedouin, and also eventually by archaeologists, and started appearing on the market from 1952 to 1956. One of the comical little episodes that happened during this time was that the Israel Antiquities Authority said that they would pay the Bedouin to bring the scrolls to them rather than to take them to these black-market antiquities dealers, and they said that they would sell them for a certain price per square centimeter. Well, what happened was the Bedouin were then cutting the scrolls up into square centimeters and bringing in a square centimeter at a time.

So, as these scrolls were coming in, and everybody was just, like, pulling their hair out over the frustration of seeing these scrolls that had clearly been deliberately cut, they took one of the fellows, one of the Bedouin, into their gentle caresses, and persuaded him to take them to the place where these scrolls were being found. And so, at this point, there was kind of a transition, and they really began to look in these things, and more of a scientific kind of archaeological kind of excavations. Now, they could see where the scrolls were in situ.

They could talk about the layers and all that wonderful stuff that archaeologists like to do. The real mother load of scrolls was found at Cave 4, which was discovered in 1952. And here's the cave right down there, and it's kind of hard to get to in our day.

It was kind of hard to get to in the old days, too, and so there's been a lot of speculation on how they got those scrolls into that cave. And we can imagine maybe they rappelled down the side of the wall, or something of that sort. And why, of course, why did they put the scrolls in those caves? That's another big question, but we think we might have the answer to that one.

I'll talk about that in a minute. So, eventually, the Bedouin are working for the government to try to find scrolls. Eleven caves in all are discovered to contain scroll fragments.

Some of the fragments from Cave 4 are really, really small, really degraded, and other scroll fragments are much larger and far more intact. So, all of the scrolls are discovered right around in this area up here. Cave 1, Cave 4, Cave 11, and then there are some minor caves that have fewer scrolls, but also some important finds as well.

Interestingly enough, Masada, as well, some scrolls were found there, too. And at Nahal Hever, there were also scrolls discovered here, but they're from a later period. So, this region along here by the Dead Sea is very dry, and because of that fact, because of the dryness of the region, these scrolls could be preserved.

From most of the area throughout Israel, anything like this turned to dust a long, long time ago, but there by the Dead Sea, they were preserved. So, in all, we have eleven caves, about 30,000 fragments of scrolls. We believe that these scrolls comprise about 900 different texts.

A number of different kinds of texts here that we find. Now, I should pause for a minute here and talk a little bit about the process of finding the, of putting these things together, you know. When initially these scrolls are found, of course, nobody, very few people, I should say, actually studies the scrolls themselves these days.

We study the scrolls from photographic plates, which are usually clearer than the texts themselves are anyway, but you can imagine the task that people had when they've got 30,000 fragments of scrolls, and those scrolls comprise about 900 texts. So, you figure you take 900 jigsaw puzzles. You take about half the pieces and throw them away.

You take the boxes, you throw them away, and then you say, let's put together our jigsaw puzzles. Yeah, it was a long, hard process, and even to this day, you'll see in the journal that somebody is announcing, ah, I found a new join! And everybody, yay, a new join! They discovered that some small portion of a scroll on some photograph

belonged to some other text. We match these things up on the basis of things like handwriting, for instance.

Theme is another important thing. If it's a biblical text, well, that, of course, is easy because we recognize the Bible, and these texts are very much like the Bible we're familiar with. But sometimes what we find is that, particularly with those early scrolls that came in, that were being brought in from various places, we didn't even know which caves they came from.

So, figuring out how to put them back together again and reassemble these things, that was a major challenge. So, let's talk about these biblical texts because, again, as I say, those were the ones that really seemed to get everybody's attention at the beginning. For the most part, most of our Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament came from the time of the Middle Ages.

I don't remember the exact number off the top of my head, but I believe that the oldest Hebrew manuscript of the entire Old Testament comes from about a thousand AD, believe right around that period. So, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we've got copies of the Bible in Hebrew, in the original languages, a thousand years older than anything we had previously had. And, of course, the initial thinking among the skeptics was, aha, now we're going to see the way that all those people changed the Bible through the ages.

Instead, what we find is that they didn't. Over a thousand years, the Bible actually changed very, very little. And it's a real testimony to how careful and meticulous the scribes who did the work of transcribing, translating—as you know, the Bible was translated into different languages—and transmitting the text from one generation to the next were.

But, when we look at these texts here, 19 different manuscripts of the book of Genesis. Now, of course, not all these manuscripts are complete. In fact, none of these manuscripts are complete.

The only one that's close to being complete is really the Great Isaiah Scroll. But most of them are portions of biblical books. So, when we say that we've got 19 copies of the book of Genesis, what we mean is, we've got 19 different manuscripts that we've identified as being of the book of Genesis.

And some of those manuscripts might just consist of a few lines. 17 copies of Exodus, 13 of Leviticus, 7 of Numbers. Look at the book of Deuteronomy.

30 copies that have been found from the book of Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy is also quoted a lot in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there's even a text that we call the Temple Scroll that apparently was based upon the book of Deuteronomy

and serves as sort of like a commentary in Deuteronomy. They loved the book of Deuteronomy.

Two copies of Joshua, three of Judges, four of 1st and 2nd Samuel, three of 1st and 2nd King, 21 copies of Isaiah. Obviously, that also was an important text to these people. Six of Jeremiah, six of Ezekiel, 12 of the Twelve Prophets.

The Twelve Prophets in Jewish tradition were always written in a single scroll, as long as they've been Bible. So, if we find one piece of one of the minor prophets, like, say, the book of Hosea, you count that as having a whole scroll of the Twelve Prophets. 36 copies of the Psalms, two copies of Proverbs.

Now, it's not that these people didn't like Proverbs. They loved Proverbs. In fact, they wrote a lot of their own Proverbs, but they didn't have very many copies of the book of Proverbs.

Four copies of Job, four copies of the Song of Solomon, which is interesting because according to the Mishnah, the rabbis were still debating whether or not Song of Solomon should even be in the Bible. They had some questions about that. Four copies of Ruth, four of Lamentations, two of Ecclesiastes, zero copies of the book of Esther.

I'll explain that in a minute. Eight copies of the book of Daniel. Now, even though that seems like not very many copies of Daniel, there were also, I should point out, a number of pseudo-Daniel texts, texts that purport, that seem to have been written by Daniel or that claim to have been written by Daniel, or that are Danielic in their nature, that use imagery from Daniel, including some of the most controversial of the scrolls.

During this period, just before and during the time of Jesus, the book of Daniel was big stuff, really. I mean, that whole kingdom of God language used by Jesus, where do you think he got that from? He got it from the book of Daniel. Ezra and Nehemiah, this one's a little controversial because some people think that they've got a piece of that and others, meh.

But Ezra and Nehemiah were typically considered a single book by the Jews, and one copy of a portion of 1 and 2 Chronicles. So, why no book of Esther? Well, what we're going to find out a little bit later, as we're looking at some of these other texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, is that these people were very, very much opposed to the intermarriage of Jews with Gentiles, with non-Jewish people. And the book of Esther is all about how a Jewish lady marries the pagan king and saves her country.

That was not the kind of message that these people were interested in hearing. And when we look at their list of their holidays, for some reason Purim is not in that list.

About 205 texts we got, and that number might have changed recently because we're constantly revising these things.

This is kind of the last that I knew about it. In addition to the texts from the Bible, there are also previously known Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Now, what are we talking about here? Well, I've talked a little bit about books of the Apocrypha, of course, about how the Apocrypha are books that were written typically in this time that we call the intertestamental period.

They were preserved in Greek in the Septuagint. The Jews didn't consider them scripture. The Jews didn't keep them.

And so there were no Hebrew or Aramaic copies of any of these books in existence. There are some other translations a little bit later of some of them. So, we have those things.

We also have the books that we call Pseudepigrapha, which were preserved because somebody thought of them as scripture. The main ones here that I'm talking about are 1 Enoch and the book of Jubilees. 1 Enoch and Jubilees were preserved by the Ethiopic Church primarily and translated into Coptic.

The books were also preserved in some other regions of the church and some other Orthodox sort of splinter groups and so on. But we didn't have any manuscripts of these books that dated earlier than the Middle Ages again. So, what we find among the Dead Sea Scrolls? Five copies of the book of Tobit.

The book of Ben Sirach, Sirach, the Wisdom of Ben Sirach. I've mentioned that one, a wonderful book of Proverbs and so on. The letter of Jeremiah.

Psalms 151 is kind of a surprise because Psalm 151 almost in some ways seems like a Greek composition, but it here appears among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Pseudepigrapha, 20 manuscripts of 1 Enoch. They liked this book.

Yeah. Jubilees, 16 copies. And again, the influence of Jubilees and particularly Jubilees calendar is extensive.

A lot of scholars believe that Jubilees might have been one of the earliest books of what we call the Pseudepigrapha and definitely influenced the writing of 1 Enoch and of other books among these. Jubilees is, as I mentioned long ago, but you've probably forgotten, a kind of a sort of history of early Israel, and it divides history up into these 49-year Jubilee periods. And so, it says this happened in the first Jubilee and the second Jubilee this happened and the third Jubilee it's written as if it's a revelation by Moses.

And some of the major themes of the book of Jubilees reflect the concerns of the early Hasmonean era. And so, we see things like the importance of the priesthood. We see things like don't go intermarrying with foreigners.

That's a big theme in Jubilees. We see ideas about the calendar, and I'm going to talk about the calendar more in a few minutes here, but there was a very stern disagreement among different Jewish groups about whether you should be using a lunar calendar or a solar calendar. And that was a major point of dissension.

So, Jubilees says we use a solar calendar not a lunar calendar. If you know something about Judaism to this very day they continue to use a lunar calendar or what we call a lunisolar calendar for their religious observances. Anyway, then there's the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs which was known.

Six copies of this and this one is a little bit more iffy because the version that we have in the Dead Sea Scrolls is really quite different from the later versions that were preserved in Greek. So about 50 texts fall into this category. Works that we already knew of that existed but only in translation in Greek and in Ethiopic and in some cases in Latin or other tongues as well.

Now we've got them in their original languages. Wasn't that cool? Previously unknown Jewish texts. These include, first of all, some general religious compositions, which include some stories and some rewritten Bible. What we mean by rewritten Bible is when you take a Bible story and you tell it in your own words and typically by adding a lot of stuff to it and doing it in new and different ways.

Poems. A lot of poems. Some beautiful poetry, some eh.

And wisdom literature. Wisdom literature that includes a lot of proverbs, a lot of admonitions where you're just trying to tell people, hey my son don't go messing around with them bad women you know that'll bring you grief and that kind of thing. Non-religious texts.

There are a few of those. There are some contracts and letters and things of that sort, including a very remarkable text, what we call the Copper Scroll, which has been a bone of contention through the years, but the Copper Scroll is a text that apparently is a list of treasures that were hidden somewhere. The text was inscribed upon copper rather than the usual writing materials that they used, and for a long time it was thought to be maybe not even real, you know, because the amounts of riches that were recorded in this text seem well remarkable and one of the Early Scrolls investigators described it as the demented ravings of an Essene.

It's like, well, who would go and put go through all the trouble of inscribing demented ravings on a piece of copper, right? So, we believe at this point I think the

consensus opinion is that it is authentic. That it was written on copper because they wanted to preserve it and that it very likely is a record of objects that were removed from the temple in Jerusalem and then hidden in other places probably at the beginning of the Great Revolt.

Then we have the sectarian texts. The sectarian texts include those texts which are related to the Qumran community. The word for themselves was the Yahad which translates community. Yahad comes from the same root as the Hebrew word which means one. So Yahad means a unity or a community and related to their teacher of righteousness. These include things like rules. There are several different rules.

The community rule which I talked about is only the largest and most complete, and I have to say that these don't always agree with each other completely in detail. There are some areas of divergence among them here.

Another weird coincidence was the discovery of the Damascus document or CD, which had previously been published as a Zadokite document.

and what makes this whole thing weird and has made our heads explode sometimes is that? in the 1800s in the excavations of a Synagogue in Egypt one of the texts that was brought forth was this lengthy Document that sort of talked about this group that had separated from the Jews and had gone to Damascus and had lived in the wilderness and had suffered persecution. It was a list of their various rules and their ideas about the future and so on and so forth.

This was published as I say back in the late 1800s as they called a Zadokite document because they thought it sounded like Sadducee and teachings. Then, lo and behold, we discover a copy of this thing in the Dead Sea Scrolls a long way away from Egypt much earlier than the version that had been discovered in Cairo at the synagogue ruins.

And so, we are left with this bit of what can we say? All kinds of questions that are very technical like, for instance, the fact that the Synagogue in which these were discovered in Egypt was not a rabbinic Jewish synagogue. It was a Karaite Jewish Synagogue, and the Karaites were a Jewish movement that grew very large just before the Middle Ages period and was kind of a rival to Judaic to rabbinic Judaism, which eventually, of course, won out.

But the Karaites did they have some kind of connection to the Dead Sea Scrolls group? If they didn't, then what are they doing with one of their texts? As far as we can tell, the beliefs of the Karaites were not like the beliefs of the Dead Sea Scrolls sect. So, as I say, we just throw up our hands and say we don't know we don't get it. Why did they keep this thing?

Anyway, so rules biblical interpretations and we talked already about the Commentary on Habakkuk these kind of commentaries are called Peshirim. The word Peshir simply means interpretation. But the reason why they're called Peshirim is because of the unique form of these things. The way that they do these things is they will quote a verse of the Bible book, and then they will say Peshirim, which means its interpretation. Then they will go on and they will give an interpretation of that verse

These particular texts are pretty much reserved for or this particular method was pretty much reserved for texts that they considered to be prophetic. What they considered to be prophetic and what we consider to be prophetic weren't always the same thing.

For instance, there is a Commentary on the book of Psalms in the same form they considered the Psalms to be prophetic which is interesting because you might remember in the book of Acts on the day of Pentecost when Peter preaches and says that we know that David was a prophet and he did not speak these words. He quotes from the Psalms of himself, but he spoke them of the Messiah who was to come so the Dead Sea Scrolls sect shared a similar view with Peter that the books of the book of Psalms is a prophetic composition.

But also a number of others, and typically they're Interpretations of these texts. They're all foretelling something that's happening in the life of the sect itself. Letters. We got letters, and I've already mentioned 4QMMT, Some of the acts of the law, and

We've got magic texts. Oh, yeah magic some amulets. We've got amulets that they used to ward off demonic spirits and things of that sort You know, this is something that we don't often think about again. It's something that so many of us don't really understand about the ancient Near Eastern world in part because Of the selectivity of our sources you know. The writers of the Old Testament did not trust magic. But you can be sure that the common people were doing all kinds of magic spells and things It was just all over the ancient world, and so from the Dead Sea Scrolls we see that the Jews were not immune to this, and even a very strict Jewish sect like the Dead Sea Scrolls sect practiced magic in its ways not black magic of course.

You know that that's a different thing You know black magic is when you're using spells to try to curse people and things of this sort know what these spells were primarily for is for things like defending yourselves against evil spirits or dispelling ghosts or maybe things that are going to cure sicknesses and that kind of thing those kinds of things that we would consider magic. They considered some of them to be kind of more like science, but anyway, so we shouldn't get so upset about things like, you know, ah well, never mind.

We won't go there, but let's talk about horoscopes for just a minute We've already

seen some horoscopes. We talked about astrology and how Astrology became a really big deal for Judaism eventually. Well, we already see this happening in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there are a number of texts there in the scrolls, which are horoscopes for individuals within the group.

One of the texts has been that there's a figure whose horoscope is cast that that people have described as being an antichrist figure because they would be One of the things that they do is they that is in addition to when people are born. They also do things like the physiognomy, which is like, you know, looking at the bumps in the head and features of the face and that kind of thing.

There are also things like they're the signs that accompanied their birth, but they're talking about this one fellow who they say that they had where their person is divided into seven parts and some of those parts are light and some of those parts are darkness. You've got this one guy who is all darkness, you know and other people who are almost all light. So, most people fall somewhere in between.

So let's talk about the biblical texts here because that was really an important thing to a lot of people when these texts were being discovered and I think that a lot of the excitement about the biblical text has sort of died down through the ages. It really shouldn't have because this is something that still remains pretty important to us. So, before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls what did we have as far as texts? What did we have for the basis for understanding the antiquity of the scriptures? Again, you're going to hear people, skeptics. You go reading on the internet you're going to see people saying well the Bible was written and rewritten and rewritten all through the ages by a bunch of old people who just were trying to control people and who hated women and stuff like that. Even from before the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we could demonstrate quite easily that that was Balderdash; I mean, we have manuscripts of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, that go all the way back to about the late 2nd century AD. So, there's no question about the fact that from very early times they pretty much had decided on what this text consisted of.

We've got manuscripts of the Vulgate, which was the Latin Translation of the Old Testament, and the earliest of those manuscripts comes from about 700 AD. Now, we know that the Vulgate was translated quite a bit earlier than that Jerome's who was responsible for the Vulgate had worked in oh, I think 430 AD maybe Anyway sometime around that era and when he was doing his work there already was a Latin translation of the Bible, but it was not adequate. So, Jerome undertook his work to make a better translation, but again, our earliest manuscript comes from about 700 AD. We have Syriac translations of the Bible. Syriac is an Aramaic language, and These came from the 6th to 7th century AD okay, and Then comes the Masoretic text.

This is the text that really forms the basis for every modern translation of the Old Testament: the Masoretic text. Well, the word Masoretic comes from the word Masora, which means tradition, right? It's the people who worked on this. There was a group of scholars called the Masoretes who were responsible for producing this thing, and one of the things that they bear in mind with the Old Testament is that they were not producing museum pieces. That was not their purpose. They were producing manuscripts that were to be used in the synagogues and read and handled, and when you read and handle text the hand, the text gets worn out. What did they do with texts that were worn out? They buried them. They did away with them and treated them in a way as respectfully as they could because anything that had the name of the Lord on it was regarded to be holy. So, they were very careful about those about these texts and what they did with them. But for the most part they didn't just stick them on a shelf somewhere and let them gather dust when it's when a text got worn out.

It was disposed of in a respectful manner. So the earliest text that we have from the Masoretes, the earliest Hebrew Manuscript of the Old Testament, comes from about 900 AD. When we do our translations of the Old Testament today, as I said, the basic text that we use is the Masoretic text. That's the foundation for every modern translation and one of the things that people were really excited about is oh boy we're going to get to look at the original Hebrew stuff here in the Dead Sea Scrolls and see how much the Masoretes might have changed stuff through the ages. Well, again, we already had the Septuagint.

We had the Latin translations. We knew that they were very good at their work but it really took the Dead Sea Scrolls to show us just how good these people, these Masoretes, were at their work because for the most part, the scrolls have confirmed the accuracy of the Masoretic text.

So, you think Masoretic text 900 AD, earliest manuscript, and the Dead Sea Scrolls where the earliest manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls is probably around 200 BC. So you're talking 1,100 years here of the text being copied and re-copied and re-copied and re-copied and in all that time, very little and very minor changes were made in the text as it was passed on through the ages. 95% yeah, we'll take the Great Isaiah Scroll here as an example. 95% of the words in the Great Isaiah Scroll are identical to the words in the Masoretic text. Most of the variance between the Great Isaiah Scroll and the 900 AD Masoretic text are insignificant.

Of the 166 Hebrew words in Isaiah 53, which is, of course, a theologically pretty important text for Christians. Only 17 letters in the Dead Sea Scroll, Isaiah Scroll, particularly the Big Isaiah Scroll in 1Q15B, which is which is a major Isaiah Scroll, differ from that of the Masoretic text and we're using one of the Cave 1 Isaiah Scroll here because it's more complete at that portion but anyway ten letters only spelling differences, so 17 letters are different in ten of the cases. It's a difference in spelling.

the same word, just spelled differently. Four letters Represent some stylistic changes, and in three letters, We have a substantial addition, and this is in verse 11 where? the Masoretic text reads, And after the travail of his soul, he shall see beep.

The Dead Sea Scroll says after the travail of his soul. He shall see light and that same phrase is found also in the Septuagint. So, in this case, clearly, a word had dropped out somewhere in the translation, and the transmission of the text and the Dead Sea Scroll has managed to verify that the translations were correct and the Masoretic text was incorrect.

Sometimes the scrolls do correct the Masoretic text, and this is kind of a fun little example here Isaiah 14 for If you read this in the King James Version, which practically nobody does anymore, but hey, we will. We will take it as a King James Version. The King James translation was based upon the Masoretic text. Okay So in 14 for that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon and say how hath the oppressor ceased. The Golden City ceased. Pretty good. Good try their good stab at it. I mean Babylon Golden City that makes sense, right? The word in the Masoretic text is Madhava this is the only time this word appears in the Old Testament the only place and so when you get something like this, we call this a hapax legomena. When you get something like disappearing in the Old Testament, you have to guess what it means.

Okay? one of the ways we guess is by comparing the word to other languages that are similar, like Aramaic, and in this case, the word Dahab in Aramaic can mean gold. Okay, and it's similar to the Hebrew word for gold. But in the Dead Sea Scroll Isaiah Scroll, on the other hand, The word is not Madhava, but rather Mahava you can see here. There's a small difference here We've got a dalet which has that nice little sharp pointy up there, and here we have a resh which has the curve at the top now I read a lot of Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts, and I can tell you in some people's handwriting the Daleth and the resh look exactly the same.

You're just basically making a decision on your vocabulary and, in this case, the word Rahav. This is related to the word Rahab, You know, and it means to be arrogant or to be puffed up or full of oneself. So, in this case, this is a good Hebrew word. We can figure this one out really easily. So instead of how hath the golden city ceased rather almost all modern translations will say how hath the arrogant one languished or something of that sort or gone away or something, right?

So, among the Dead Sea Scrolls, one of the big fields of study of these biblical manuscripts is within what we call text types, and this was again a field that was already being studied before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. But, now, we got data, data like we never had before right? the Masoretic text, the Septuagint and other Old Testament translations sometimes reflect different traditions.

I should add here also the New Testament to this as well because when the New Testament quotes from the Old Testament very frequently a quote quotes from the Septuagint and sometimes we don't know what it's quoting from right You know a nice little famous example, he shall be called a Nazarene, okay We don't have any idea where that comes from You know, we don't know where they were quoting that from apparently they found that in their Bible somewhere, but we don't know where it was But anyway, so we got the Masoretic text the Septuagint.

We got these other Old Testament translations reflecting different traditions. Sometimes, some of the scroll manuscripts seem to be identical to the Masoretic version very frequently. In fact, Sometimes They seem to represent the Hebrew version that underlies the Septuagint. Now the Septuagint isn't that much different from the Masoretic text? But there are sometimes significant differences. So sometimes, when we look at the Dead Sea Scrolls we can see that this was the basis for some of the Septuagint readings of certain things and translations. Sometimes, they seem to quote the support New Testament quotes as in the case of Psalm 22, which I'll show you here real quick Psalm 22:16 in the Masoretic text we read like a lion ka'ari are my hands and feet Okay, doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense, right? well, in the New Testament, This verse, Psalm 22, is regarded as a prophetic Psalm right in the New Testament, and this verse is applied to the crucifixion fiction of Jesus, and We're told they have pierced my hands and feet. Okay. Now, the word for pierced would be ka'aru rather than ka'ari as in the Masoretic text.

Okay, we can see how that could happen. Can't we, right? Well, here is a case where in the Dead Sea Scrolls we read not ka'ari but rather ka'aru so the Dead Sea Scrolls actually support the New Testament's reading of that verse.

So let's talk about the scrolls and Judaism and our understanding of Judaism before the time of Jesus as well as Judaism isn't in the time of Jesus shall we who is this sect that we have been speaking of that sect of where which we speak? Who hid these things? Why did they hide these things? Were they a single group, or were they a variety of groups? This has become, of course, one of the \$64,000 questions, which is still being batted around to this very day now several theories here about the origins of the Dead Sea Scrolls and, of course, the most common theory and the theory that really came out in the very early days of the discovery of the scrolls and was actually suggested by Albright, the famous archaeologist long long ago is that the scrolls were written by the Essene's.

Well, you know, when you got six scrolls, you can say hey, look, the Essene's wrote these six scrolls when you got 900 scrolls. On the other hand, that's getting a little much, right? Particularly if there were only 4,000 Essenes scattered all over the Mediterranean world. Was every man a scribe? Who knows would that all God's people were scribes, right? The idea that the that the texts are from the Essene's Living at Qumran is I would say still the way I say the orthodox theory of scroll origins

There have been writing materials found at Qumran we know that when the settlement of Qumran. I don't want to get in over my head because I would quickly be an over-my-head-talking archaeologist, but at the settlement of Qumran, we know that there were several different settlement layers.

Originally, it was probably built during the time of the Hasmonean Kingdom as a fortress. Eventually, it was abandoned, and probably at the time when the scrolls were being hidden, it was serving as a small settlement for people whose bodies were actually buried there up on that platform or that Mesa near where the community was. But a Settlement, these ruins at Qumran, were very quickly associated with the scrolls as archaeologists were digging around up there. They said ah, this must have been where the scrolls were written, and part of the thinking for that is because of the fact that you saw that picture that cave four. You saw that picture and one of the only ways to get into that place would have been from the top and to go down. And so up on the top of that plateau is where that settlement was and so it was natural to make this connection between that settlement at the top and that cave down below and all those scrolls hidden in there.

So, the orthodox theory is that you had a whole bunch of scribes working night and day at Qumran writing out these texts. The Purest form of this Theory is that almost nobody believes anymore. You know nowadays pretty much everybody has come to the conclusion that, No, they couldn't have written all these texts at Qumran, so Probably a lot of them were written in other places copied in other places maybe then brought to Qumran and that they served as the library of the Essenes as they believe that they were there and That those scrolls were then hidden away in the caves probably during the time of the Great Revolt in Around 67 to 70 AD or 74 if you count all the way to the destruction of the Masada.

Another theory, and this one a little more nuanced, is that the scrolls were written not by Essenes, but by an Essene-like sect. And this one I'm a little more comfortable with. One of the reasons why I have a problem with the idea that the scrolls were written by Essenes is that the word Essene never appears in any Dead Sea Scrolls.

Nothing that could even be translated Essene ever appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls. If the word Essene, as I suggested, might have come from the verb *asah*, to make, or to do, or something of that sort, even then we don't find them using that word to describe themselves in any way. They call themselves the *yachah*, the community.

They never used any word that sounds anything like Essene. In other words, they did not identify themselves as Essene. Somebody else might have identified them as Essenes, but there's no way these people identified themselves as Essenes.

So, I guess that's my main issue there. An Essene-like sect? Well, that's certainly a possibility. Another theory is that the scrolls were written by some other Jewish sect

and then hidden near Qumran, and the identity of this sect has been batted around quite a bit.

The idea that they were written by zealots was proposed very early by a fellow by the name of Cecil Roth. Cecil Roth believed that these texts were written in Jerusalem by the zealots and gathered up there. If you read *The War Scroll*, you see where Cecil Roth got his ideas.

The idea that these people were looking forward with eager anticipation to this battle that they were going to have against the Romans. Now, that sounds like zealots. So, Cecil Roth believed that they were written by the zealots.

Michael Wise has revived that theory in recent years and has brought attention back to that again. But it's not really widely accepted among most scholars. Another scholar has proposed that the sect was actually Sadducean.

And not kind of surprising, he bases his idea upon the sectarian practices reflected in the scrolls. And what he does is he takes and he compares these things, these Dead Sea Scrolls and some of the practices to what he sees in the Mishnah and in the Talmud as being practices attributed to the Sadducees. And he, being a Jewish scholar, places much more emphasis on orthopraxis than orthodoxy.

And so, he says the scroll sect must have been Sadducean. Well, I actually was in a seminar where we debated the merits of that theory. And don't want to disrespect the scholar too much because he's a good scholar.

But it seemed to us that some of his readings of the Dead Sea Scrolls were probably not correct. And even some of his readings of the Mishnah might not have been correct. But at any rate, this one doesn't seem to have caught on a lot except for people who are more typically among Jewish scholars.

You'll see this one thrown about a bit. But practically all the beliefs that are attributed to the Sadducees, beliefs like, for instance, angels. We see all kinds of things about angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls, doing all kinds of stuff.

The Sadducees didn't believe that angels got involved in our lives, right? Things like the idea of life after death. There's at least one scroll, maybe a couple more, that talk about life after death and resurrection of the dead. Clearly, the Dead Sea Scroll sect put a lot of stock in oral traditions as the Pharisees did.

So, in a lot of these core issues that define the Sadducees, the sect is different. And to me, there's no way of reconciling the Dead Sea Scrolls' beliefs and treatises on some of their beliefs with those that we find among the Sadducees. Remarkably, a

number of people have tried to argue that the Dead Sea Scrolls represent the early Christian movement.

These include people like Barbara Thuring, who made tons and tons of money writing a book a long time ago, Robert Eisenman, Bagant, and Lee, who were kind of famous for writing; I think their book was Holy Blood, Holy Grail, which sold a lot of copies. But several of these people have really capitalized on what would have to be considered the most, I would say, the most unlikely theory of scroll origins, but one that really, really captures the attention of a lot of people. What are the strengths of this position? Well, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, you have this teacher of righteousness who was persecuted by a wicked priest.

Hey, Christianity, right? Jesus was persecuted by the wicked high priest. There you go. You have this similar preoccupation with angels and spirits.

Then there's some of the catchphrases like light and darkness, which we get that in the book of John quite a bit and other places in the New Testament. The new covenant is one of the phrases that they use. Of course, that comes from the book of Jeremiah, but hey.

The community. And so, several people have used these small parallels between Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls sect and have determined that the Dead Sea Scrolls sect must have been the Christians, the early Christian movement. And this, of course, was before the Christian movement was completely remade by St. Paul and recreated into Paul's more palatable kind of version.

The weaknesses with this theory is there is no person named Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls anywhere. No Jesus, no Yahoshua, no Yeshua, none of it. So, Jesus is not mentioned anywhere.

The teacher is never said to atone for anybody's sins. Then there's the whole thing about the militancy of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Jesus had this wonderful thing about you. You've heard it said in the past: love your neighbors and hate your enemies, but I tell you, love your enemies.

You won't find that statement anywhere in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In fact, the community rule, that foundational document, says you shall hate the sons of darkness with perfect hatred until the day of vengeance. In fact, some people have suggested that maybe Jesus' words were directed to those people who were drawn to that Dead Sea sect, whoever they were.

And then there's the simple fact that the scrolls were too early. They originated at least 100 years before the time of Jesus and probably more than 150 years before. So, we've got a number of different possibilities here.

One theory that was proposed that was popular for a while and has kind of lost its steam now was that the scrolls were not written by any particular Jewish sect but rather represent all different Jewish sects. It is quite clear that there are a number of different perspectives represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but it's also quite clear that there is a core of texts that represent a single ideology. So, the idea that there was a single sect that was in some way behind these texts seems to me to be undeniable.

Who they were? I'll just stick with the Essene-like thing, okay? What does a sect say about themselves? Well, there are a couple of different versions here. We have the Damascus Document, which I talked about before. And we have the Community Rule.

The group says that it came together in the Age of Wrath to seek God. What was the Age of Wrath? Probably the time of the Hasmoneans. Most likely that's what they're talking about here.

After they had been seeking God for 40 years, God raised up the Teacher of Righteousness, who led them in truth. Now the Teacher, you say, was persecuted by a wicked priest, and he had to flee. And he fled with his followers to Damascus.

And here again, there have been questions about whether this literally means Damascus, as in like the city of Damascus, which is still around today, or if this is some kind of a symbolic description of some other place. And a lot of people have claimed that that actually means Qumran. Now, Qumran is a long way from Damascus and nothing like Damascus, but hey, you know, whatever works for you, right? The sect would then live in the wilderness of Damascus.

Now, here again, you say, ah, wilderness. Doesn't that mean like out in the middle of the deserts or something? Well, not necessarily because these people also tended to think of the wilderness as any place that wasn't them, spiritually speaking. So, they would live in the wilderness of Damascus until the coming of the Day of Vengeance, which was when they were going to rise up against the unrighteous.

And that would happen 40 years after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness. So, it's interesting. And again, I have to give my props to F.F. Bruce, who was such a wonderful scholar.

F.F. Bruce did some math here and supplied some numbers and so on and realized that their chronology was really based upon the 70-week chronology of the Book of Daniel. So, once again, we see how the scrolls sect were very much beholden to the Book of Daniel and they're thinking, why are they separating? And here I'm directing our attention back to 4QMMT. Let's keep it short here.

4QMMT, this is one portion. This is one of the largest portions of 4QMMT. The text is very fragmentary.

It exists in a couple of different manuscripts and we try to put as much of it together as we can because we know this was an important text. It lays right out. Apparently, this was a letter.

And at the end of one of the manuscripts, they lay out and they're very obsequious to whoever they're writing this letter to. We're writing this to you because we know you're a great guy. You want to do what's right.

You've got the power to make these changes we need made. But just think about David and think about the great kings of old and how they made a lasting legacy. You too can make a great legacy if you'll do the things we tell you to do.

Who was this letter written to? That's been argued a lot. A lot of people think it was written to a Hasmonean. I don't think so.

These people didn't like the Hasmoneans. My suspicion is this letter is really quite a bit later than most people think, and it was probably written to one of the, well, possibly to one of Herod's successors, not Herod himself because nobody liked Herod, but one of his successors, one of his descendants who was regarded as being more pious than he. At any rate, what does it say? It starts right off with this difference between the solar and lunar calendars.

The lunar calendar is based upon the observations of the moon, and it's a wonderful thing for agricultural societies because what you can do is you can look at the moon at night, and if it's a full moon, you say, ah, it's time to take the crops to market or whatever. If it's a new moon, you say, new moon, new month. And you can even see in the language the connections here, right? Because the word moon comes from the same root as the word month and the same thing is true in Hebrew.

So very frequently, these agricultural societies would build their lives around the phases of the moon. So, you've got each month and in the Mishnah it talks about the question of which city they observe the new moon and then they proclaim the month has begun and that would be how they would decide when their different festivals would come. There is a problem with the lunar calendar, and that problem is that the lunar year is actually shorter than the solar year.

The solar year, of course, is how long it takes the earth to go around the sun. And so the problem with the fact that the lunar year is shorter is that each year that passes, if you're counting only by lunar months, okay, 12 lunar months, that's a year, but now your year is shorter than the solar year and you've still got more year left. And

so, what happens is that your festivals that are celebrated in, say, the 12th month, for instance, or something like that, keep moving farther and farther back in the year.

And so, before you know it, if you don't do anything about this, you're going to be celebrating your spring harvest festivals in the middle of winter. What they did was, they used a process called intercalation, where twice in every seven years they would add an extra month to the calendar. So, you'd have the first month and you'd have 12 months and then some years you would have your leap year where you'd have a whole extra month.

We've still got leap years today, of course, but our leap years are only a single day rather than a full month. Anyway, the Dead Sea Scroll community and their sympathizers or people who actually preceded them, whoever wrote the Book of Jubilees, we don't know who wrote the Book of Jubilees, but the guy who wrote the Book of Jubilees said, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. It was always God's intention that we use a solar calendar.

And so, the Dead Sea Scrolls community started right off by saying, this is the way your calendar should go. And they had this nice long list in 4QMMT which described when each one of the festivals would take place, where they would fall, where their Sabbaths were going to be, etc., etc., based upon a lunar calendar rather than a solar calendar. This was a big deal to them because the question is, if they're not doing, say, the ritual of the Day of Atonement on the right day, does it work? The Dead Sea Scroll sect would say, no, it doesn't.

If you're not doing it on the day you're supposed to do it, on the day God commanded you to do it, then the whole ritual is meaningless. And it has not taken away the sins of the people, the guilt of the people. Therefore, this was a very important issue to them.

Another issue was the immorality of the priests. And by immorality they meant they weren't keeping the law the way they thought they should keep the law. I already talked about the issue of the washing of the hands, the fact that they felt that the priests were washing their hands wrong.

But that was just the beginning of the issue. Other issues were that apparently the priests were letting their dogs come into the precincts of the temple. And they say the dogs were getting ahold of the meat from the sacrifices and eating the bones and eating the meat from the sacrifices.

And that, of course, is like throwing that which is holy to the dogs, to these people. No, you can't do that. Intermarrying with foreigners.

Big, bad, no. Do not do that for these people. And again, this goes back to the book of Jubilees.

Other things that were regarding the use of the ashes for the heifer, for the ritual of the red heifer. All these little, seemingly piddly points of the law, but to them all very, very important. Marriage laws.

Questions of who you can marry, when you can marry, who you can divorce. All these things. These are issues that they addressed as well.

I already mentioned washing of the hands. Also, washing of the body was another issue that they raised. So, very briefly, let me try to sum up here a little bit.

I mentioned at the beginning of this lecture how there was this one Bible scholar who said that he couldn't think of anything that the Dead Sea Scrolls have done to really help our knowledge of biblical studies. Well, of course, we know that the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery has not only validated the text that we had already, but it has also improved the text that we had in a number of ways as we've compared the Dead Sea Scrolls to some of the ancient manuscripts. Some other things that have been very important to us are the Dead Sea Scrolls, you might say, which have completely muddied up our picture of when the Bible came into the form that we consider to be canonical, at least the Old Testament.

Josephus, in his work against Appian, is quite clear that the Jews had a fixed canon of scripture. I don't think that this is emphasized enough by scholars because a lot of us are sitting around scratching our heads and saying, oh, we don't know when the canon was finished. We know it was finished by at least 90 A.D. Because Josephus says, unlike you Greeks, you know, you Greeks, you've got all kinds of holy books, and they all contradict each other.

But not us Jews, no sirree. We've got a holy canon that consists of only 22 books. Don't do the math.

But anyway, it consists of only 22 books. It helps if you remember that the 12 minor prophets are considered one book. But anyway, 22 books, and they never contradict each other.

So, this is Josephus, 90 A.D. He thinks, and he further goes on to say, that nobody would ever dream of adding anything to those books that we consider holy. So, you get to the Mishnah, and you see that in the Mishnah they're still talking about whether or not the Song of Solomon should be considered part of scripture, and whether or not Ecclesiastes should be considered part of scripture, and whether or not Esther should be considered part of scripture. My impression is that all those arguments were really theoretical at that point because Josephus is so adamant the

question is solved, according to him, by his day in 90 to 100 A.D. But the question of when it was solved, that's the big one for us because we don't know.

What we do know is that some of the books that we don't consider scripture, like Jubilees, are quoted in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls as if they are scripture. And one book that we know is scripture, the book of Esther, was definitely not treated as scripture by the Dead Sea sect. So there seems to have been, when these scrolls are being assembled and brought together, there seems to have been some questions, at least among this group, about what should be considered Bible and what shouldn't.

Which, as I say, further muddies the water of what was canon. Now, on the other hand, there seems to have been great agreement. For the most part, everything that we see as scripture, they saw as scripture, with the possible exception of Esther.

So, the Bible was pretty much in existence, as we know it, already by about 150 B.C., the Hebrew Bible. Some questions still remained around the edges. But for the most part, still pretty close to being settled.

The method of biblical interpretation used in the Dead Sea Scrolls, I've mentioned some examples of this already, about how they would take a text that may be considered prophetic, and they would take something like, for instance, in that Habakkuk commentary that I mentioned. The book of Habakkuk is about the coming of the Babylonians to be used as a tool of judgment against God's people. Well, in the interpretation given by the Dead Sea Scrolls sect, it's not the Babylonians.

No, those Babylonians are actually the Romans. So, they take that text and they apply the words of that text to their situation that they are dealing with in their day. And we see them do this over and over again.

Some of the texts, some of the prophecies which were originally referring to, say, the nation or something like this, they apply to an individual like the teacher of righteousness. Now, sometimes, when we read the New Testament, we realize that apparently, these guys haven't read how to read the Bible for all it's worth because they do things with the text that we would never view as being legitimate. They apply text to Jesus, which really didn't seem to have anything to do with Jesus.

But now with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the interpretations that we find there, we can see that what the New Testament writers did was regarded as being perfectly legitimate in their day and age, that those foundations were already laid, and that they were following the precedent which we see in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scroll sect lived in expectation of an imminent battle against the Romans behind the leadership of their prince. And this kind of reveals the prevailing attitude of the time.

When you get to the time of the Romans, Judea is kind of a boiling pot for a number of reasons. One of the reasons I have argued in a number of places, you ever heard that saying, if you give a boy a hammer, he's going to find that everything needs nailing, you know? Well, I wrote my dissertation on the book of Daniel, and so I see Daniel everywhere. But I see the influence and the focus on Daniel very heavily in this period, and that these people believed, based upon primarily the readings of the book of Daniel, that they were living on the verge of the end of the world, at least the end of the world as they knew it.

They felt fine about that because the world that was coming was going to be better because they were going to be in charge. So, at any rate, that same mindset, of course, appears in the New Testament. And that same sense that they're living on the verge of the eschaton is present in the New Testament texts.

And then it's interesting in reading in one of the Qumran texts, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we had read about how they predicted that the day of vengeance was going to come 40 years after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness. And in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in one of these biblical interpretations, they say, well, the time of the end has been extended, because the mysteries of God are inscrutable. So, here these people were, they were sure 40 years after the death of the Teacher, they were going to be rising up to destroy the Romans.

I'm quite sure that the time had come and gone, and they're still wondering what had happened. And they said, well, you know, God has stretched out the last times because, you know, who can understand God? This very much reminds me of a certain book in the New Testament, where somebody says, and people are saying, hey, where is his promise coming? Why haven't we seen it happen yet? And he says, don't you know, one day with the Lord is a thousand years, and a thousand years is a day, and the Lord is being patient because he wants more people to be able to repent. So, these people who are living here on the verge of the Eschaton and expectations of the Eschaton are finding themselves disappointed and having to redo their math and their calculations a little bit.

But the attitude, the anticipation, the mindset, all those kinds of things which were so characteristic of the Dead Sea Scroll sect, we see also reflected in the early church. And in that way, we can say, yeah, there are some lines that can be drawn here, but not lines of genealogy or something like the Dead Sea Scroll sect gave birth to the Christians, but rather lines of analogy. We have one we might call the millennial sect; I like the word millennial, people who are living in anticipation and expectation of the end and their role in it.

And then we have another sect, the sect of Christians, who are also living in anticipation of the coming of the Eschaton and their role in it. And both groups grapple with what it means as the years pass and their anticipated end does not

come. So, interesting stuff, interesting times, wonderful to be able to read these texts, to be able to pull a book off the shelf, and to be able to open it up, and to be able to see all those obscure little words written by these people over 2000 years ago.

This is Dr. Anthony Tomasino and his teaching on Judaism before Jesus This is session 11, The Dead Sea Scrolls.